

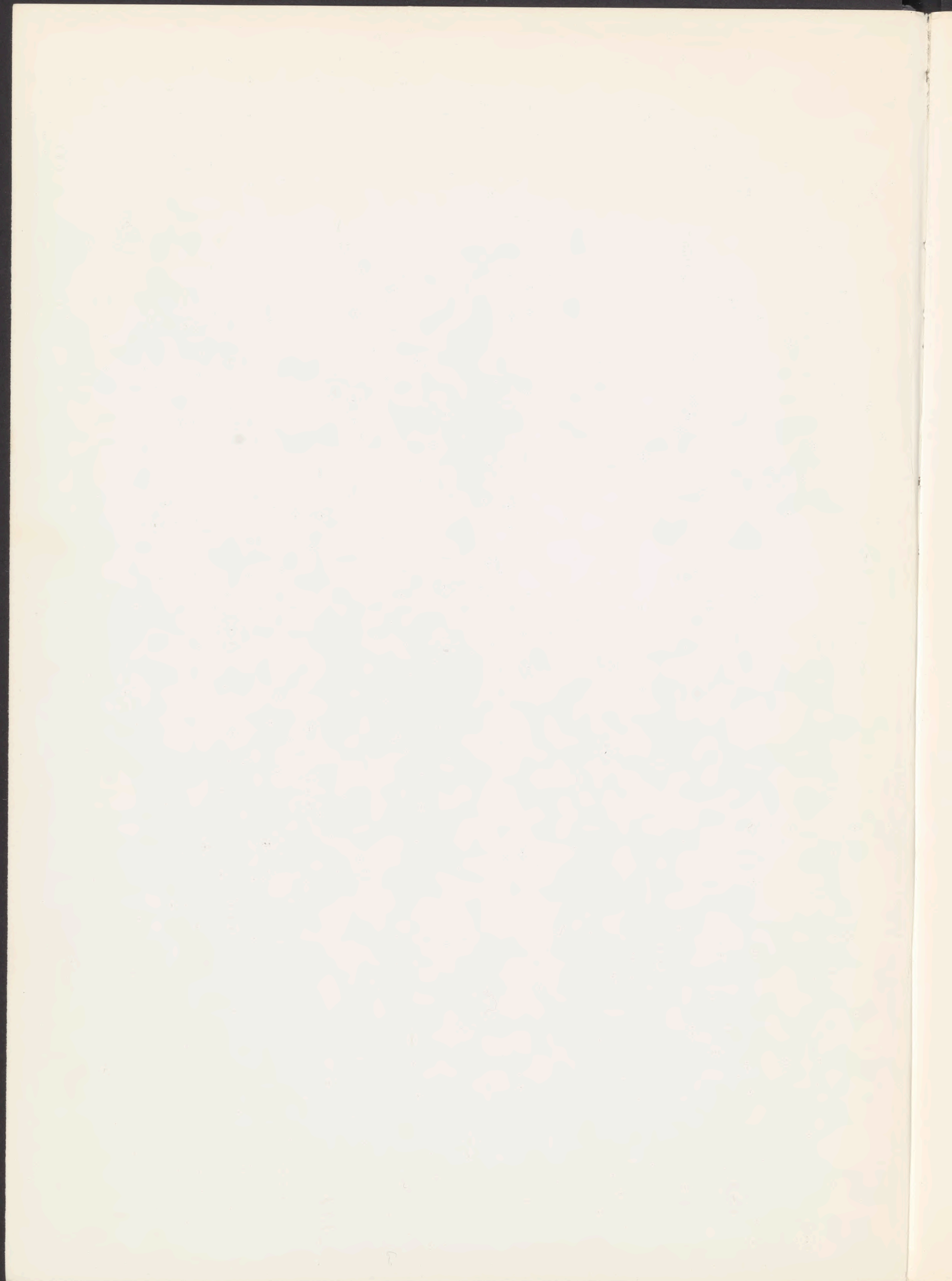
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1966/67

3 self-taught
pennsylvania
artists

HICKS
KANE
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1966



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October 21-December 4, 1966

January 6-February 19, 1967

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Acknowledgment

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L. A. A.

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Foreword

We are proud to present the paintings of three Pennsylvania painters. They have one thing in common: none had any formal training in art, but in other respects they were individual personalities. Their life-experience gives a particular and special quality to the paintings of each man. This exhibition—bringing together comparatively for the first time the paintings of Hicks, Kane, and Pippin—was assembled by Leon Anthony Arkus, who also wrote the admirable text which permits us to understand the personalities of these artists as well as to become more familiar with the details of their lives.

It is of some interest to quote French critical opinions taken from *Art and Mankind*, edited by René Huyghe: "Naïve painting is perhaps appreciated more in the United States than elsewhere. Among the essentially American modern primitives are John Kane and Horace Pippin." Also, there was "an astonishing number of talented primitives at this time (in 19th-century America). The best of these was Hicks."

Kane won world fame during his lifetime, and it has not diminished. In fact, his paintings are more sought after than ever before. Hicks and Pippin also became famous.

The essence of the exhibition is best expressed by Mr. Arkus' quotation of John Kane's words, "You don't have to go far to find beauty . . . all you need is observation." These three artists had a wonderful sense of beauty, and each found his way alone to express it.

Gustave von Groschwitz

Introduction

Outside the historical main stream of art, a group of solitary figures emerges, belonging to no specific school, style, or tradition. They are often referred to as primitives, Sunday painters, folk artists, or popular painters. Here they are designated as self-taught, probably the most appropriately descriptive term of all. Like others of their kind, Edward Hicks, John Kane, and Horace Pippin had no formal education in painting. They maintained an independence of personal commitment that set them apart from others who discovered art for themselves but joined the movements of their day.

Fundamentally, all artists are self-taught. Academic thought, so much a part of academic training, is discarded, and a process of discovery and invention follows through which the painter finds his own expression. In a sense, the approach to art of the self-taught artist is not unlike that of the schooled, with the important exception that he cannot reject a schooling he has not had, and therefore he must seek technical experience to express a multitude of already formulated ideas. Technique, then, is the dominant note of his search. However, once the self-taught artist is capable of producing within the confines of his technical knowledge, the differences between him and the so-called professional are many.

The self-taught painter rarely has the opportunity to communicate with other artists. He generally comes to art in his middle or late life, and his total experience at this point is alien to that of the sophisticated artist. His is a practical knowledge secured from his trade and everyday living. Horace Pippin was one of the few self-taught painters who did not have to con-

fine his painting to those rare moments when he was free from the primary concerns of earning his living.

The schooled painter, on the other hand, seeks out his fellow artists to exchange ideas, to bring about an ambience more sympathetic to creativity, and to form a common front against a generally hostile world. He is more responsive to change and acknowledges chance and abstraction in his work. The self-taught rarely deviates from the essential idea he is trying to create, and conscious abstraction does not enter into his particular vocabulary. For this reason, though in time the self-taught artist finds greater facility with his medium, he is unlikely to show any major stylistic change.

Hicks, Kane, and Pippin had an intuitive feeling for color and design. Their works reflect a freshness and deep poetical sensitivity, qualities that place them on an equal footing with the best of the schooled artists of their day. Their uninhibited direct statement possesses that vitality sought by Paul Klee when he wished "to be as though newborn" and "almost primitive." Vincent van Gogh wrote to his brother, Theo, of Gauguin's desire "to paint like children," a simplification of art echoed by the German Expressionists.

While the self-taught artist turns to nature as a guide, he does not imitate it. He paints what he knows and senses and in this regard creates a personal imagery rather than a stereotyped academic rendering. Kane painted directly from nature but transposed pictorial elements to suit his design. As an experienced railroad man, he seemed to be indifferent to the fact that the trains in some of his paintings ran on the left set of tracks. Pippin's landscapes were mostly from memory, while Hicks created his own backgrounds after copying his subjects from prints of other artists' works. It is not known whether Hicks's farms were painted on the scene, though the orderly buildings, manicured fields, and groupings of animals, charmingly posed as though for a photograph, were certainly in part imagined.

Hicks, Kane, and Pippin were in their forties at the time they completed their first work. All three artists tapped their childhood memories as a source for paintings. Hicks was not a portraitist. Kane and Pippin

were, both turning out masterworks in the form of self-portraits. Although of different faiths, they had a true devotion to religion and painted sacred themes. American history inspired them, as did our national heroes, who appear in their works. Since all three painters had no more than a rudimentary schooling, they identified themselves with George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, both self-educated men.

Together with Joseph Pickett, another painter from Pennsylvania, Hicks, Kane, and Pippin are unquestionably the outstanding Americans in this genre. Unfortunately the unavailability of the three or four works ascribed to Pickett (1848-1918) caused his omission from this exhibition. Pickett's *Manchester Valley* in the collection of The Museum of Modern Art is one of the greatest paintings ever created by a self-taught artist.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, Pennsylvania had a highly developed folk art. The German Pietists introduced fractur, quill drawing, and linear decoration. Crafts in wood, metal, plaster, and pottery were produced in the eastern part of the state. "Anonymous" portraitists were active throughout the area. It was from this folk tradition that the art of Edward Hicks took shape. He came to his art through his craft of sign painting. His was an insulated agrarian society, fearful of domination by the growing industrialization in the seaboard cities, a conflict of interests that was to become one of the issues of the Civil War which took place a dozen years after his death. Hicks's argument with the citified Orthodox sect of the Friends, together with his affectionate portrayal of his rural Bucks County, reflected his advocacy of an agricultural economy. Despite his failure as a farmer, he believed "farming more consistent with the Christian."

John Kane, an unskilled immigrant laborer, gloried in the new industrial scene. He found "beauty everywhere"—in smoke pouring from factory and locomotive stacks, in busy streets and clustered houses. His Whitmanesque evocation of America—its people of many nationalities and races, ever building, and its countryside combining the natural with the man-made—is the spirit of his paintings.

In Horace Pippin's works we discover a third orientation, a world turned inward. A crippled ex-soldier and son of a Negro slave, Pippin saw man as a pawn of his bestial nature, committed to slaughter and to prejudice. In paint he has left us a record of his own transition from the bitter, withdrawn victim of society to the man at peace with himself and capable of hope.

First popular recognition was given to Horace Pippin when he was forty-nine years old, to John Kane at the age of sixty-seven, and to Hicks long after his death. Pippin was to see his one-man shows almost sold out. Hicks scarcely mentioned his paintings and gave or sold them to friends. Kane, too inured to poverty and disappointment, was unmoved by success. He continued with his trade of house painting until his seventieth year, when age forced him into retirement. Whether it was because of public acknowledgment and the prizes awarded to him, or the new freedom to paint full time, or a combination of both, the major part of his art known to us was created during the last seven years of his life.

No appraisal of the self-taught artists would be complete without reference to Henri Rousseau (1844-1910), unquestionably the greatest French painter of this genre. With very little formal education and none to speak of in art, he began to paint after his fortieth year. Having served with the French army in Mexico and later during the Franco-Prussian War, he was given a position by the government in the toll system of Paris; hence the reference to him as "Le Douanier." He exhibited at the Salon des Indépendants for twenty-four years, the butt of much ridicule. Gauguin, who had himself begun as a Sunday painter, was one of the few who took Rousseau's work seriously. Towards the end of Rousseau's career, Picasso, Apollinaire, Vlaminck, and a number of the Fauves and cubists gave him recognition, the first accorded to any of the significant self-taught artists. Rousseau's stature as a painter has probably awakened many to see beyond the surface naïveté and charm of the self-taught, to perceive in them the strong poetical base of their art, and to discover a statement in paint stripped of superficialities and the banalities of techni-

cal virtuosity.

Holger Cahill, one of the first to give recognition to the self-taught artists in this country, prefaced his *Masters of Popular Painting* exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art with this pungent comment: "Folk and popular art is significant for us because, in our fear that contemporary civilization has almost abandoned its form-creating function in favor of the sterile mathematics of machine-form, we are startled and reassured to find this rich creativeness still alive in the unpretentious activities and avocations of the common man. It is significant, too, because in this art we find qualities sadly lacking in the internationalized academicism bequeathed to us by the nineteenth century—an academicism which raised the banner of its anaemic and philistine conception of form as the standard and idea of universal art." This statement, written in 1938, has great pertinence today in a world devoted more and more to technological advance and to the exclusion of man himself.

Leon Anthony Arkus

1780-1849

Towards the end of his life, Edward Hicks wrote, "... how awful the consideration: I have nothing to depend on but the mercy and forgiveness of God, for I have no works of righteousness of my own. I am nothing but a poor old worthless insignificant painter." This lamentation came from one of the most popular and esteemed preachers of his day. Completely untutored except in the field of coachmaking, he began to create paintings in his fortieth year, copying virtually all his subjects from engravings in whatever time he could spare from his unpaid ministry and from the trade that supported him and his family. In his last years he produced his greatest paintings, uninhibited by the guilt he felt for the hours spent on them instead of preaching. With the passing of time, his fame as a minister has been almost forgotten, but he has come to be considered one of America's outstanding historical and allegorical painters.

Edward Hicks was born in Attleborough (now Langhorne), Pennsylvania, on April 4, 1780. He was the youngest of the three children of Isaac and Catherine Hicks. His father was an official of the British Crown and a descendant of Robert Hicks who came to Plymouth on the *Fortune*, the ship that followed the *Mayflower*. The surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown compounded calamity for Isaac Hicks, for on that very day his wife died and the rebel victory destroyed all hope of retrieving his fortune, which was irrevocably tied to the English cause. A family slave hired herself out in order to maintain the three motherless children since the now-destitute Isaac Hicks took to flight. Elizabeth Twining, wife of a wealthy farmer, David Twining, had been a close friend of Catherine Hicks, and, discovering the plight of the youngest child, she and her husband took him into their home. There was a warm relationship between the boy and his "foster" mother, and the fact that she was a Quaker undoubtedly directed him towards that persuasion.

In his thirteenth year, showing no affinity for scholarly or professional pursuits, Edward Hicks was bound over as an apprentice to William and Henry Tomlinson, carriage makers, at Four Lanes End. Brought up as a gentleman's son, he was plunged into

a rude and rough life in which he seems to have thrived. Completion of a coach was celebrated with "three or four gallons." He later noted that he was "introduced by lechers and debauchees into the worst of company and places..." Following a severe illness after one of his pleasure bouts in Philadelphia, he resolved to mend his ways and give serious thought to religion. In 1801 he became the partner of Joshua Canby in Milford (now Hulmeville) and in 1803 joined the Society of Friends. That same year he married Sarah Worstall, whom he had known from childhood.

Hicks and his wife lived in Milford through 1810. Three children were born to them there. His partnership failed, and, constantly pressed for money, he turned from constructing to painting carriages and coaches. He decorated floor cloths, furniture, fireboards, tavern signs, and lettered street markers. Quaker affairs preoccupied him. He attended religious meetings assiduously and meditated during his labors.

Temperamentally, Hicks was a strange amalgam of piety, humility, pride, and intolerance. He was quick-tempered and stubborn. He objected violently to slavery but felt that such issues had to be resolved by voluntary rather than legal or civil action. His vehemence in condemning intemperance created much ill feeling. He believed in diligence and applied himself unstintingly to whatever task he was performing. Hicks's propensity for speaking his mind at Quaker meetings resulted in his becoming a brilliant preacher.

Hicks and his family moved to Newtown, then the county seat of Bucks County. Two more children were born to Sarah and Edward Hicks in this farm center, so named by Hicks's beloved William Penn. In his *Memoirs* he wrote, "every tenth house was a tavern, and every twentieth one of bad report." Shortly after his arrival in Newtown, the local Society of Friends approved his ministry. From this point on, Hicks was to divide his life between preaching and painting. Since he received no remuneration for his sermons and his many journeys in behalf of the Friends were financed by himself, Hicks barely made ends meet. In 1813 he gave up the painting trade for farming because, as he wrote, "I verily thought then, and

still think, farming more consistent with the Christian and was willing to sacrifice all my fondness for painting." He tried for two years to make a go of it, failed, and returned to "the only business I understand and for which I had a capacity, viz., painting." Once more in debt, he strove to build up his trade. Coachmakers turned over their vehicles to him for painting. He executed elaborate tavern signs and fireboards, and, as his skill for portraying landscape heightened, we can assume that his paintings emerged as imaginative rather than utilitarian works. A wooden sign that he executed in 1825 for the Newtown Library Company is exhibited here. Hicks received one dollar for this assignment. He copied the figure of Benjamin Franklin from an engraving after the portrait by the British painter, David Martin.

Feeling the need to travel and preach, Hicks, together with two companions, set out in 1819 on horseback through New York State and Canada, visiting Niagara Falls en route. Despite this exhausting three-thousand mile trip, after his return and discovery that work was scarce, he was not deterred from journeying to Long Island to join his cousin, Elias Hicks. Elias Hicks was the founder of the Hicksites, a liberal separation group that opposed the middle-class Orthodox movement among the Friends. The wealthy, mostly urban, Orthodox adherents held steadfastly to the letter of the Bible. The Hicks cousins inveighed against evangelism and believed in silent worship. The battle between the two elements of the Society of Friends ended with an outright schism in 1827. Edward Hicks had thrown himself into the middle of the conflict, and the split was to weigh heavily on him for the rest of his life.

It was about 1820 that Hicks painted his first *Peaceable Kingdom*, the subject that has become identified with his name. Although we do not know the exact number of variations he made on this theme, we can place the number at about fifty. The inspiration for the paintings came from "The Vision of Isaiah" in the Old Testament:

"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb,
And the leopard shall lie down with the kid;
And the calf and the young lion and the fatling
together;
And a little child shall lead them.

"And the cow and the bear shall feed;
Their young ones shall lie down together;
And the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

"And the sucking child shall play on the hole of
the asp,
And the weaned child shall put his hand on the
cockatrice's den.

"They shall not hurt nor destroy
In all my holy mountain:
For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of
the Lord,
As the waters cover the sea."

Hicks, who liked to write poetry, made two paraphrasing versions of Isaiah's verse and in some instances lettered couplets on the four sides of the frames of his paintings. He added an additional stanza which appears as:

"When the great PENN his famous treaty made,
With indian chiefs beneath the elm tree's shade."

Drawing from a model would scarcely have been considered during the first half of the nineteenth century in provincial America, and, as Dr. Julius S. Held states, "... copying from prints was an established practice of official art education and ... even in strongholds of the 'academic' tradition such as the Pennsylvania Academy there was always a fair share of copyists in the annual exhibitions." ("Edward Hicks and the Tradition," *The Art Quarterly*, Summer, 1951) With the exception of his farm landscapes, all of Hicks's works derive from black and white engravings, lithographs, or woodcuts, after oils by other artists. The first *Peaceable Kingdoms* stem from an engraved illustration of a painting by Richard Westall which appeared in many of the Bibles used in the

United States at the time. The figure of the child in *The Peaceable Kingdom*, owned by The Cleveland Museum of Art, follows closely that by the Royal Academician. As Hicks amplified his theme, he borrowed from other sources. However, it is important to realize that, while prints provided instructional guides, he created the overall composition and gave to his works a poetry and life of their own. He once wrote,

"Inferior folks with only munkey's art
May imitate but never life impart."

Hicks displayed irritation with those who suggested that he repeat his sermons. They consisted of inspirational themes, delivered spontaneously and without notes. In the same sense, he found a creative joy in his art, which he on rare occasions begrudgingly admitted. Despite the many versions of the *Peaceable Kingdom*, no two are exactly alike. There was a progressive set of variations in the *Peaceable Kingdoms* that issued from his easel from 1820 until 1849, and Miss Alice Ford, in her text to the catalogue of the exhibition devoted to his paintings held at the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Collection in Williamsburg in 1960, notes the dating of these. The first group, circa 1820-1825, follows the Westall painting and contains only a few animals. From 1825 to 1830 there were the "Peaceable Kingdoms of the Branch" which were again after Westall and include a bent tree overrun with vines in the center of the painting. In the background is the Natural Bridge of Virginia and Penn's treaty with the Indians being signed in the distance, beneath the arch. Dating simultaneously with this last group, but extending on into 1840, were the "Peaceable Kingdoms of the Delaware Water Gap." Here the background changes to the scenic Delaware River, and, beside it, William Penn and his band of Quakers are again depicted negotiating their peaceable settlement with the Indians.

From 1827 through 1835, a fourth aspect of the series follows with the "Peaceable Kingdoms with Quakers Bearing Banners." As shown in illustrations 3 and 4, the peacemaking with the Indians was replaced by an assemblage of figures which Frederick

B. Tolles, in "The Primitive Painter as a Poet" (*The Bulletin of Friends Historical Association*, Spring, 1961), indicates are prominent historical and Quaker personages (George Washington is centered in the first row with Elias Hicks shown in profile facing him with a handkerchief in his hand), and the shadowy figures on the horizon line represent Christ and his twelve disciples. A fifth category is the "Middle Kingdoms" of 1830 to 1840, as exemplified by No. 8. This group, Miss Ford points out, has a crowding of subject matter and shows the Delaware Water Gap in the background. With the "Middle Kingdoms," Hicks had discarded the Westall influence in favor of other engravings.

From 1840 through 1845, Hicks painted a series of *Peaceable Kingdoms* where the lion is shown standing in profile. These make up Miss Ford's sixth category. The last classification consists of those paintings between 1845 and 1849. Miss Ford writes, "The stilted and stereotyped animals of the many *Kingdoms* from earlier series are replaced by new beasts arranged in open compositions that give a sense of serenity, order, and depth to these last paintings."

Underlying the *Peaceable Kingdoms* is an allegorical concept, relating in part to "The Holy Experiment" of William Penn. Penn viewed his colony as an asylum for the persecuted of Europe, wherein all people could live together peaceably under conditions of equality—in essence, the American dream. Hicks, never a strong believer in legislating morality, felt that man had to perceive his own strength and frailties, and, once cognizant of his inherent nature, could then strive to achieve Penn's ideal. In his *Peaceable Kingdoms*, Hicks sought to portray animals as representing various human characteristics or humors which man might discover in himself and, as a result, so govern his actions as to bring about the prophecy of heaven on earth.

Into most of the paintings of the *Peaceable Kingdom*, Hicks introduced William Penn's treaty with the Delawares. It naturally followed that the artist would enlarge this vignette into a complete picture, and three versions of *Penn's Treaty* are included in this exhibition. The paintings were copied from a print

1

9, 12, 14, 19

27, 29, 30, 34

1

7, 18

16, 20, 28

after Benjamin West's oil at The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia. Hicks probably never saw West's painting since he followed slavishly the print which was engraved in reverse. Another motif which recurs fairly often in the *Peaceable Kingdoms* is the grouping of dove, eagle, and kneeling woman, which Hicks created as a separate picture in his *Liberty, Meekness and Innocence*.

Washington Crossed Here was originally one of a pair of signs that hung at each end of the covered bridge at Washington's Crossing. It was copied from a print after the oil by Thomas Sully. Despite his family's ties to the loyalist cause during the American revolution, Hicks was an ardent patriot and a great admirer of George Washington. John Trumbull's painting was the source for *The Declaration of Independence*. The eagle, which replaced a burst of flags and a drum in the area between the two doors in Trumbull's version, was Hicks's own invention.

Although Hicks had followed the engraving by Merigot of an oil by John Vanderlyn in painting *Niagara Falls*, he had visited the scene in 1819 and was able to provide his own color from memory. Here, too, he added the animals in the foreground which did not appear in the print. This brilliant work was conceived originally as a fireboard for his family doctor, Dr. Joseph Parrish, of Philadelphia. The frame is ornamented with couplets from Alexander Wilson's poem, *The Forester*. Hicks mitred his own walnut and cherry wood frames and, when he lettered on them, generally used a modified Bodoni style of type.

During the last five years of his life, his other activities curbed by failing health, Hicks spent more time at his easel. The initial awkwardness of his painting had disappeared, together with the experimentation of his middle period. Though he continued to copy prints, his intuitive feeling for color and design and a new sense of serenity that came with confidence, brought him to the height of his creative powers. The imaginative quality he imparted to his oils breathed into them a rare vitality. His was no "munkey's art."

Hicks worked on his memoirs, which he began in 1843. *Memoirs of the Life and Religious Labors of Edward Hicks, late of Newtown, Bucks County,*

9, 12, 14, 19,
and 30

15

11

17

13

Pennsylvania, was published two years after his death. In the 1840's he also tried to market alphabet blocks for children, cubes of wood with a letter painted on each side. Whether he was the innovator of this now common toy is not known. In 1845 Hicks published at his own expense *A Word of Exhortation to Young Friends: Presented to Them without Money and without Price, by A Poor Illiterate Minister*. It provides us with an insight into the inner conflict that evidently plagued him. The tract emphasized his aversion to formal education, which he felt was synonymous with idleness and frivolity. He spoke of George Washington, his own hero and the most revered name at that time. "No academy ever welcomed him to its shade, no college granted him a diploma. To read, to write was the extent of his school learning, which he so improved in the path of humble industry that he was found at the age of sixteen a pioneer surveyor. A series of offices and appointments fulfilled prepared him to stand at the head of a band of most illustrious patriots the world ever saw, such was George Washington, the distinguished instrument in the hand of the infinitely wise Jehovah for establishing a system of government the most healthy and happy, the most successful and generous now under heaven." This was not the first of many attacks on formal education, and yet, by true standards, Hicks was an educated man. We can only conjecture whether Hicks's want of a degree caused him to feel inferior in the presence of others; whether at one moment it was the spur that drove him to preach and turned him from sign to easel painting and at the next moment, the destructive force that brought on doubt and uncertainty regarding his own worth.

The same self-rejection that characterized Hicks's attitudes towards education can be found in his comments on painting. In his *Memoirs* he wrote: "If the Christian world was in the real spirit of Christ, I do not believe there would be such a thing as a fine painter in Christendom. It appears clearly to me to be one of those trifling, insignificant arts, which has never been of substantial advantage to mankind. But as the inseparable companion of voluptuousness and pride, it has presaged the downfall of empires and kingdoms;

and in my view stands now enrolled among the premonitory symptoms of the rapid decline of the American Republic." This extraordinary indictment, reminiscent of the irrational attacks on abstract art in the 1950's, is rather incredible when compared with Hicks's dedication to his painting and the great efforts he obviously made to refine and enhance his work. He was scarcely "A Poor Illiterate Minister," but rather a famous preacher of his day, and his paintings have not "presaged the downfall of empires and kingdoms." Yet we may wonder whether we would have heard of him at all if Edward Hicks had received proper schooling.

Three small pastoral scenes were painted by Hicks around 1846. *James Cornell's Prize Bull* must have been done from life. *Pastoral Landscape* and *Landscape with Cattle* are related to his *Peaceable Kingdoms*. However, when disassociated from the allegorical theme, they become delightful paintings of the eastern Pennsylvania farm country. One of his finest works of this period is *Noah's Ark*. Inspired by the lithograph published by Nathaniel Currier, Hicks enhanced the arrangement of various elements in the print, adding the two trees to the right of the picture and providing a stormy sky of rare beauty. While he depended on prints as a guide to shape, Hicks's daily contact with nature gave him a true feeling for the landscape. He was a superb colorist and, since almost all of the engravings he copied were in black and white, he had no apparent difficulty in applying his own tonalities, generally those of the Bucks County countryside. His landscapes were the most sophisticated part of his painting, as is borne out in *The Grave of William Penn*, which was one of several studies he made after a lithograph of the oil by H. F. de Cort.

In 1845, Hicks painted *The Hillborn Farm*. It was his first work based on an actual scene. Here, as in the farm paintings that followed, he peopled his landscape with the families of the owners, including members who had died, as in the instances of the Twinings and of Jesse and Mary Leedom. *The Residence of David Twining in 1785* portrays his "foster" family and their farm as he remembered them "... in

1785 when the painter was five years old." In *The Cornell Farm*, unquestionably a masterwork, the artist added his explanation at the bottom of the canvas: "An Indian summer view of the Farm & Stock of James C. Cornell of Northampton Bucks county Pennsylvania. That took the Premium in the Agricultural Society october the 12, 1848." The largest of all his paintings is *The Leedom Farm*, which was completed a few weeks before Hicks's death. An almost obliterated inscription advises us that it was "A May morning view of the Farm and Stock of David Leedom of Newtown Bucks County Pennsylvania/with a representation of Himself. Wife. Father. Mother. Brothers. Sisters and nephew . . ."

These farm landscapes are Edward Hicks's farewell to his beloved Bucks County. They had no historical or religious connotation. They represented the people, buildings, and landscape that he knew, and if some of the animal groupings from his *Peaceable Kingdoms* found their way into the pictures, we can attribute it more to habit than intent. The superb golden skies and hazy horizons, the ordered arrangement of cattle and fields, reveal an artist at peace with himself. In his old age, Hicks could show his affection for his paintings. There was no longer the need to preach to others or the guilt he felt when he did not apply himself to "humble industry."

Edward Hicks died on August 23, 1849. Three to four thousand people attended his funeral, the largest ever held in Bucks County. They came to mourn Edward Hicks, Preacher of the Society of Friends. It was almost a century later before his works were sought after by museums and collectors and Hicks the painter was recognized.





Newtown Library Sign

1825

oil on wood

17 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 37 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches

Lent by

The Newtown Library Company





The Peaceable Kingdom
 c. 1827
 oil on canvas
 17¼ x 23¼ inches

Lent by
 Mrs. Holger Cahill





The Peaceable Kingdom
c. 1830-35
oil on canvas
16½ x 20¾ inches

Lent by
Mrs. Edith Gregor Halpert

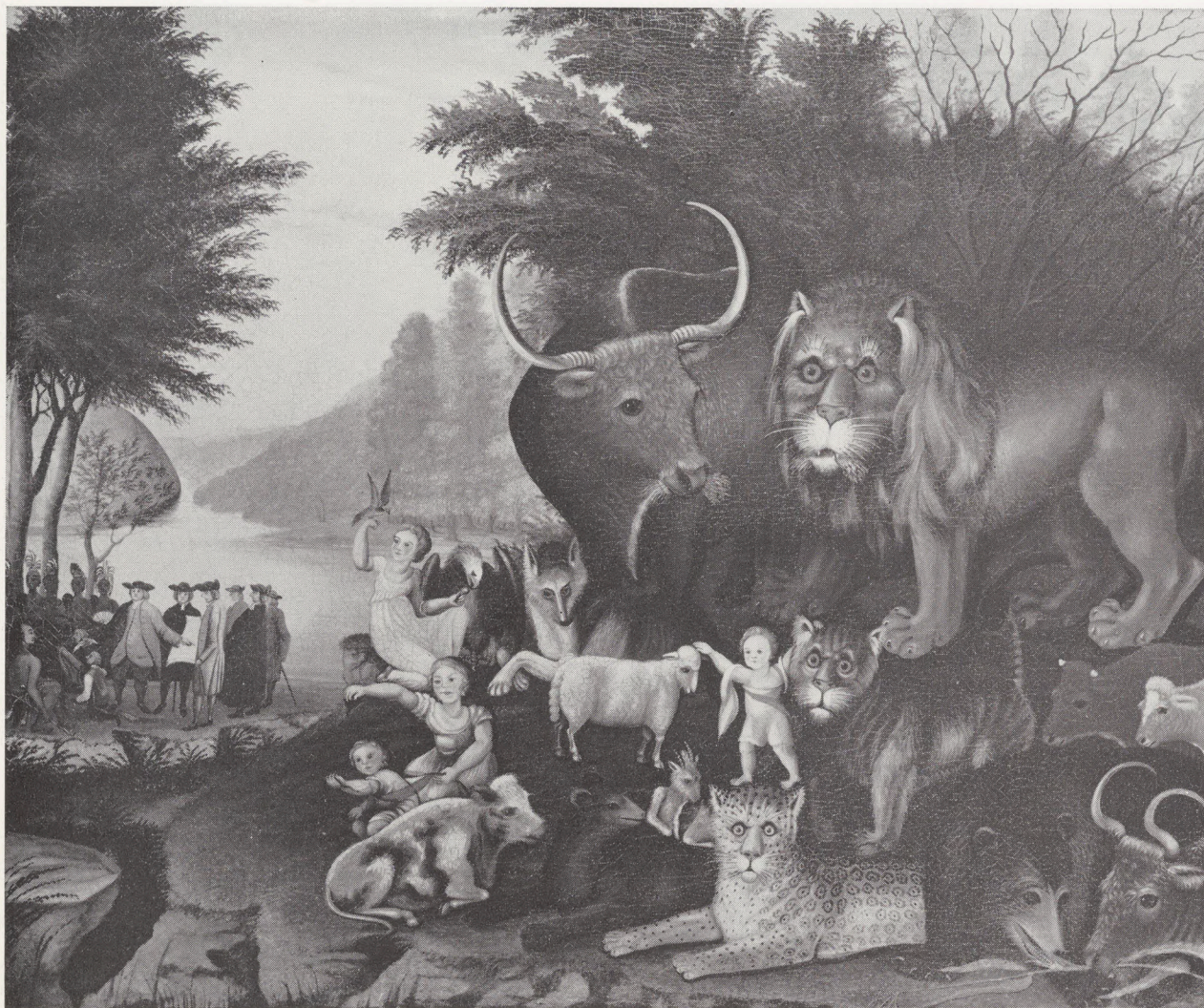
Inscribed on reverse:
 "Edw Hicks to his adopted Sister
 Mary Leedom & her Daughters
 didicates this humble peice of
 his art of Painting"

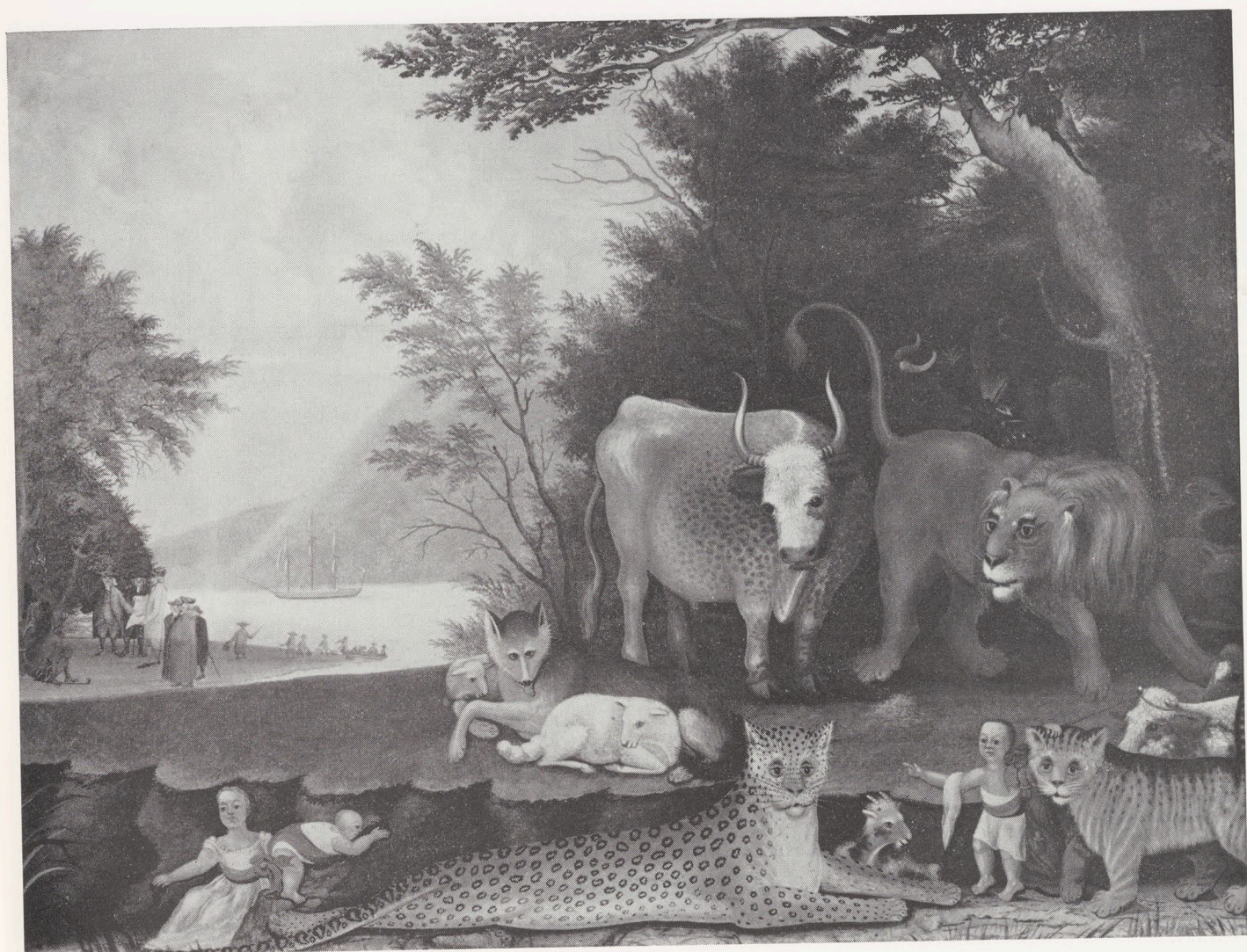




The Peaceable Kingdom
c. 1830-40
oil on canvas
17½ x 23¾ inches

Lent by
Worcester Art Museum





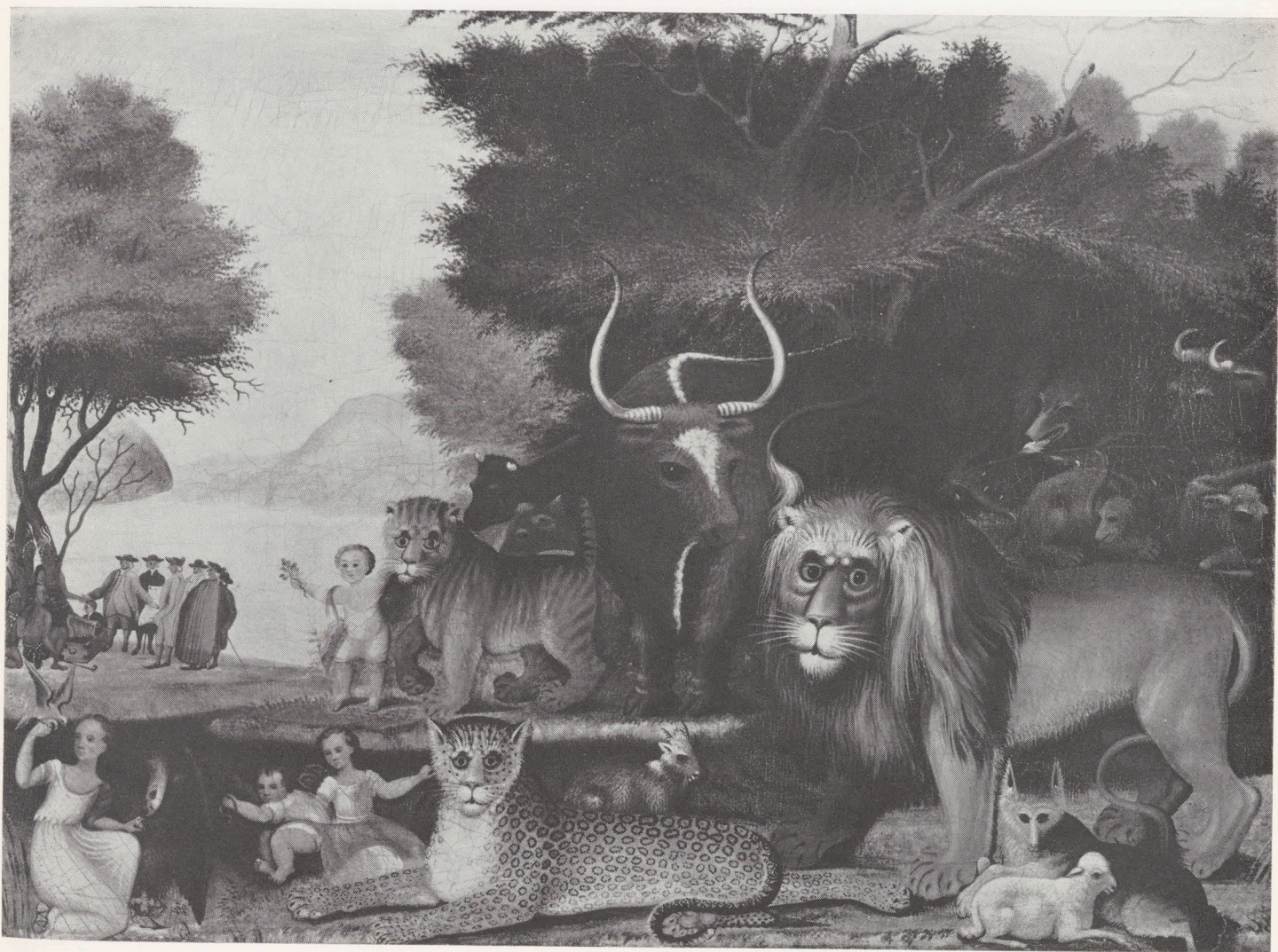
The Peaceable Kingdom
c. 1833
oil on canvas
24 x 32 inches

Lent by
Albright-Knox Art Gallery,
James G. Forsyth Fund

(exhibited only at
Museum of Art,
Carnegie Institute)



WASHINGTON Crossed here
Christmas-eve 1776, aided by Genl
Sullivan, Greene, Lord Sterling, Mercer & St. Clair



The Peaceable Kingdom
c. 1835
oil on canvas
17¼ x 23¾ inches

Lent by
Mrs. Holger Cahill

With uproar hideous, first the *Falls* appear,
The stunning tumult thundering on the ear.

Above, below, where'er the astonished eye
Turns to behold, new opening wonders lie.



There the broad river, like a lake outspread,
The islands, rapids, falls, in grandeur dread.

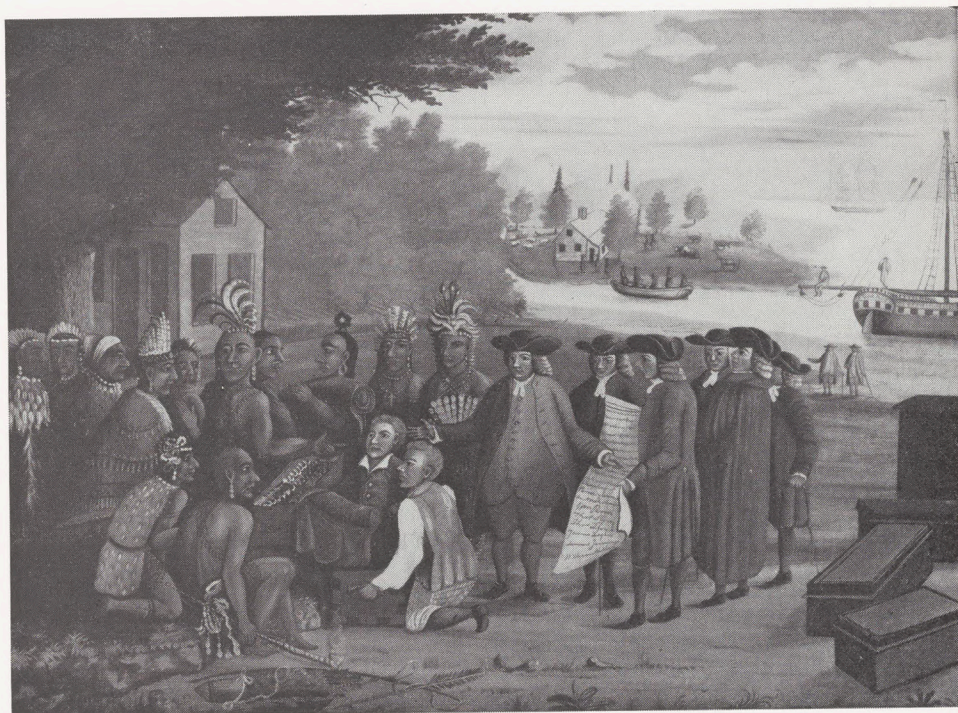
This great, o'erwhelming work of awful Time,
In all its dread magnificence, sublime.



The Peaceable Kingdom
c. 1835
oil on canvas
29 x 35 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches

Lent by
Mr. and Mrs. Charles J. Rosenbloom





Penn's Treaty
not dated
oil on canvas
17 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 23 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches

Lent by
Yale University Art Gallery,
Bequest of Robert W. Carle,
B. A. 1897





The Peaceable Kingdom
c. 1840
oil on canvas
29 x 36 inches

Lent by
Friends Historical Library
of Swarthmore College

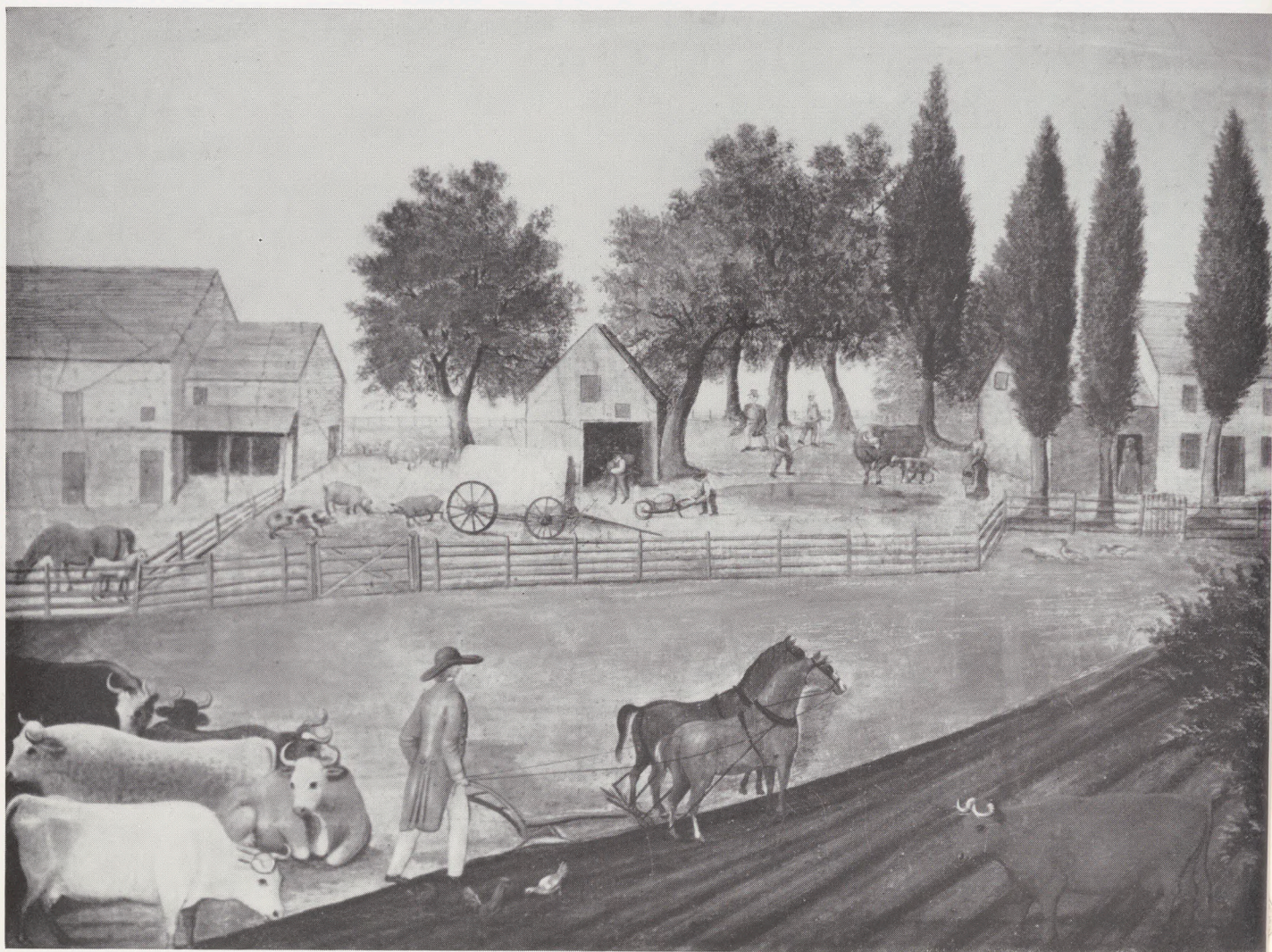




Penn's Treaty
not dated
oil on canvas
17¼ x 23¼ inches

Lent by
Mr. and Mrs. Meyer P. Potamkin

Inscribed on reverse of frame
both at the top and bottom:
"The Residence of Thomas Hillborn
in Newtown Township Bucks
County, Pennsylvania,
in the year 1821.
Purchased by his son Cyrus
Hillborn in 1845, when this
picture was painted by Edward
Hicks in his 66th Year."



Inscribed on reverse:
"Prize Bull
Edw. Hicks
1846"



James Cornell's Prize Bull
1846
oil on wooden panel
12 x 16½ inches

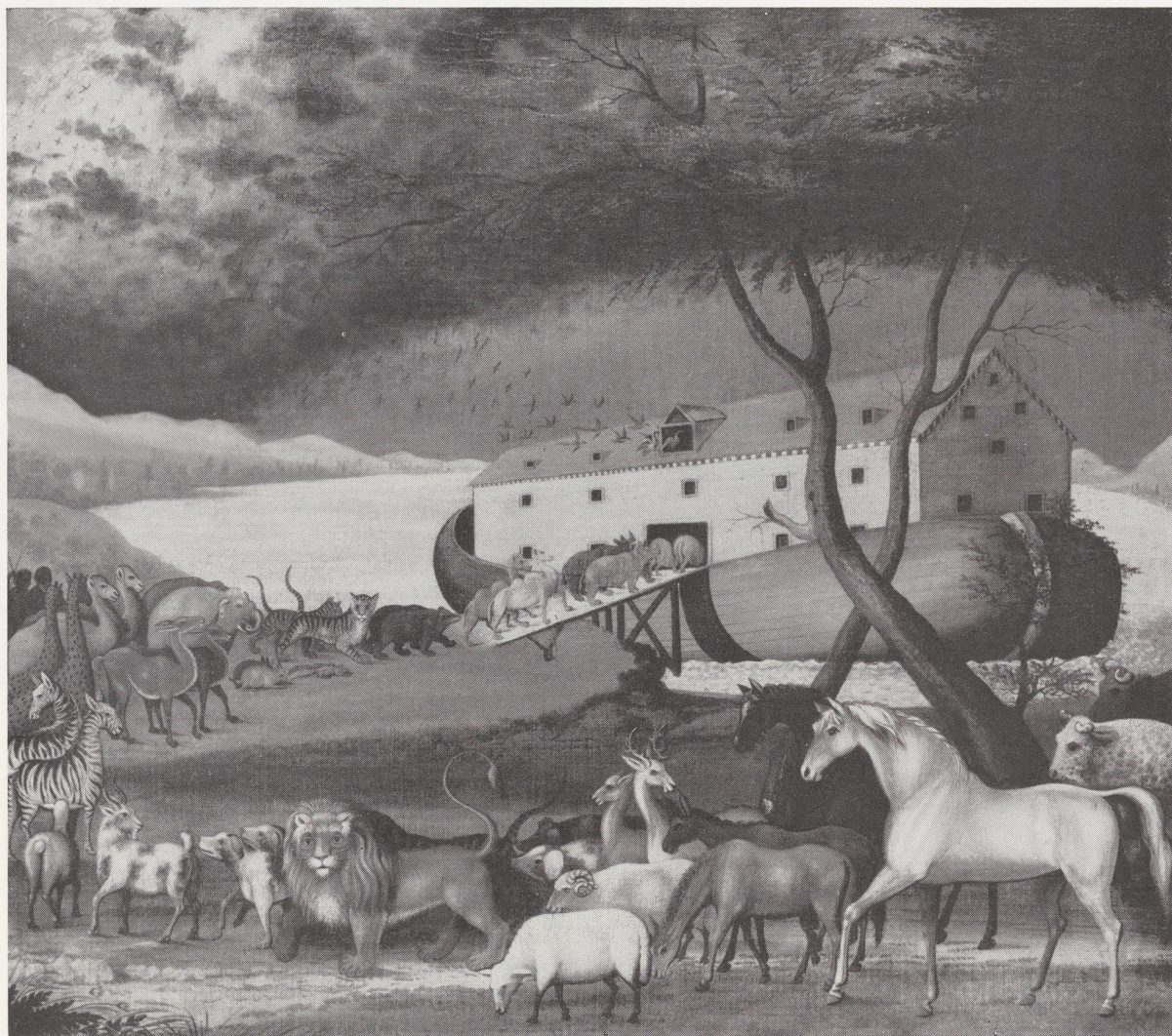
Lent by
Abby Aldrich Rockefeller
Folk Art Collection

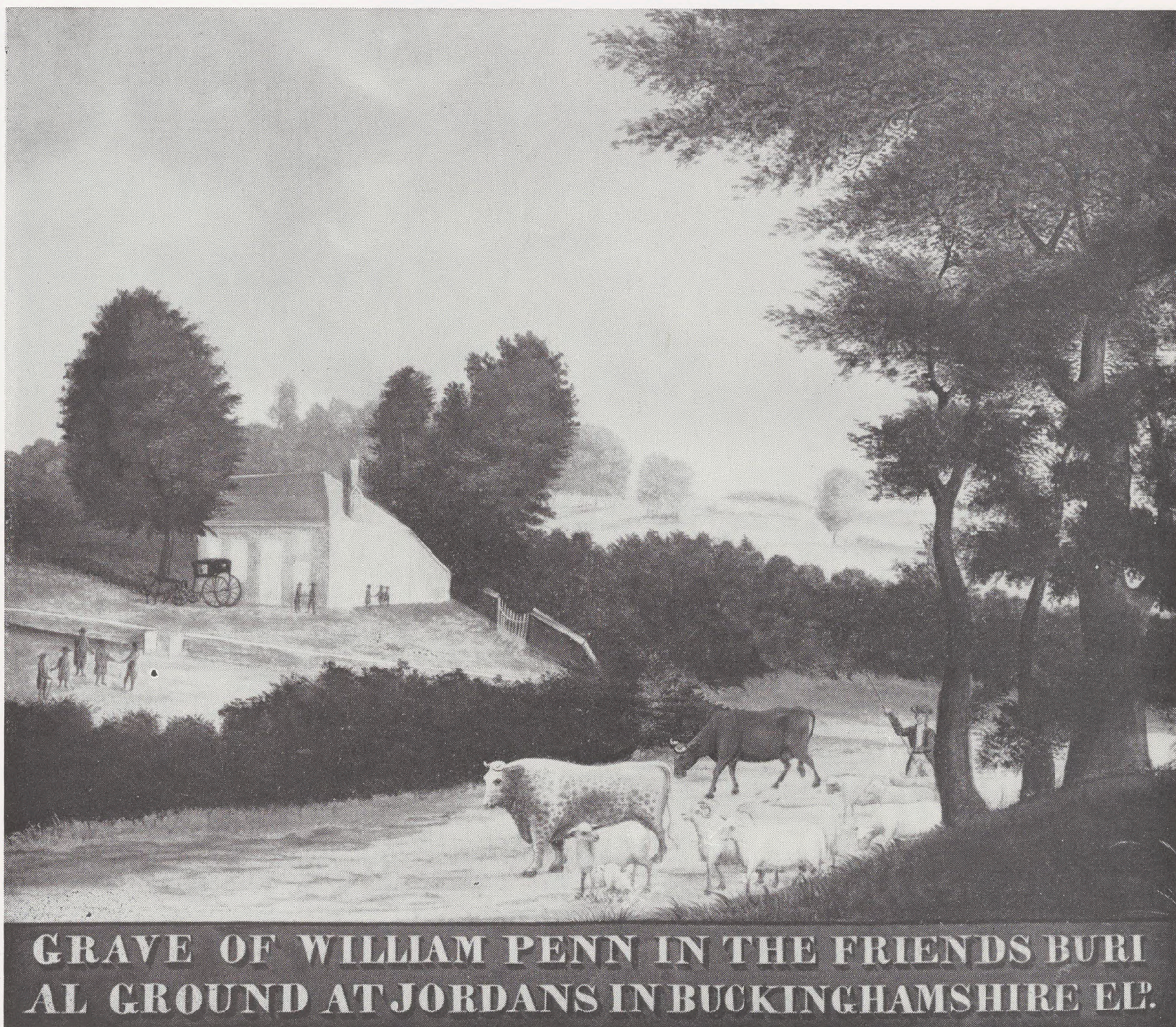




Pastoral Landscape
c. 1845-49
oil on wooden panel
16 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 20 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches

Lent by
Abby Aldrich Rockefeller
Folk Art Collection





**GRAVE OF WILLIAM PENN IN THE FRIENDS BURI
AL GROUND AT JORDANS IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE EN.**

The Grave of William Penn
1847
oil on canvas
25 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 29 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches

Lent by
Yale University Art Gallery,
Gift of Robert W. Carle,
B. A. 1897



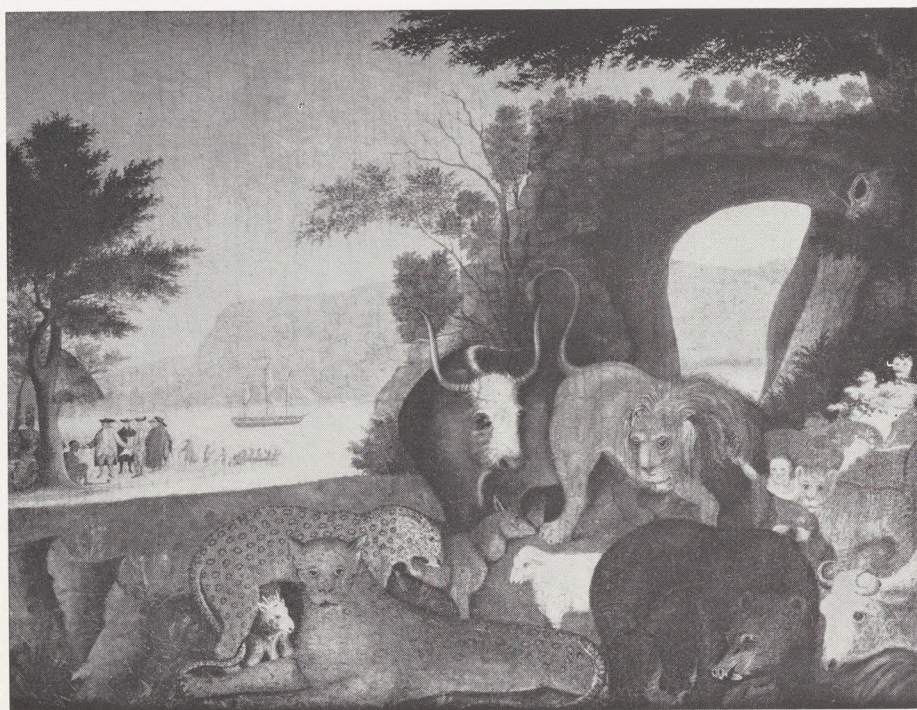


WM. PENN'S *TREATY* with the INDIAN'S 1681.

Penn's Treaty with the Indians
1847
oil on canvas
24 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 29 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches

Lent by
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Carlen

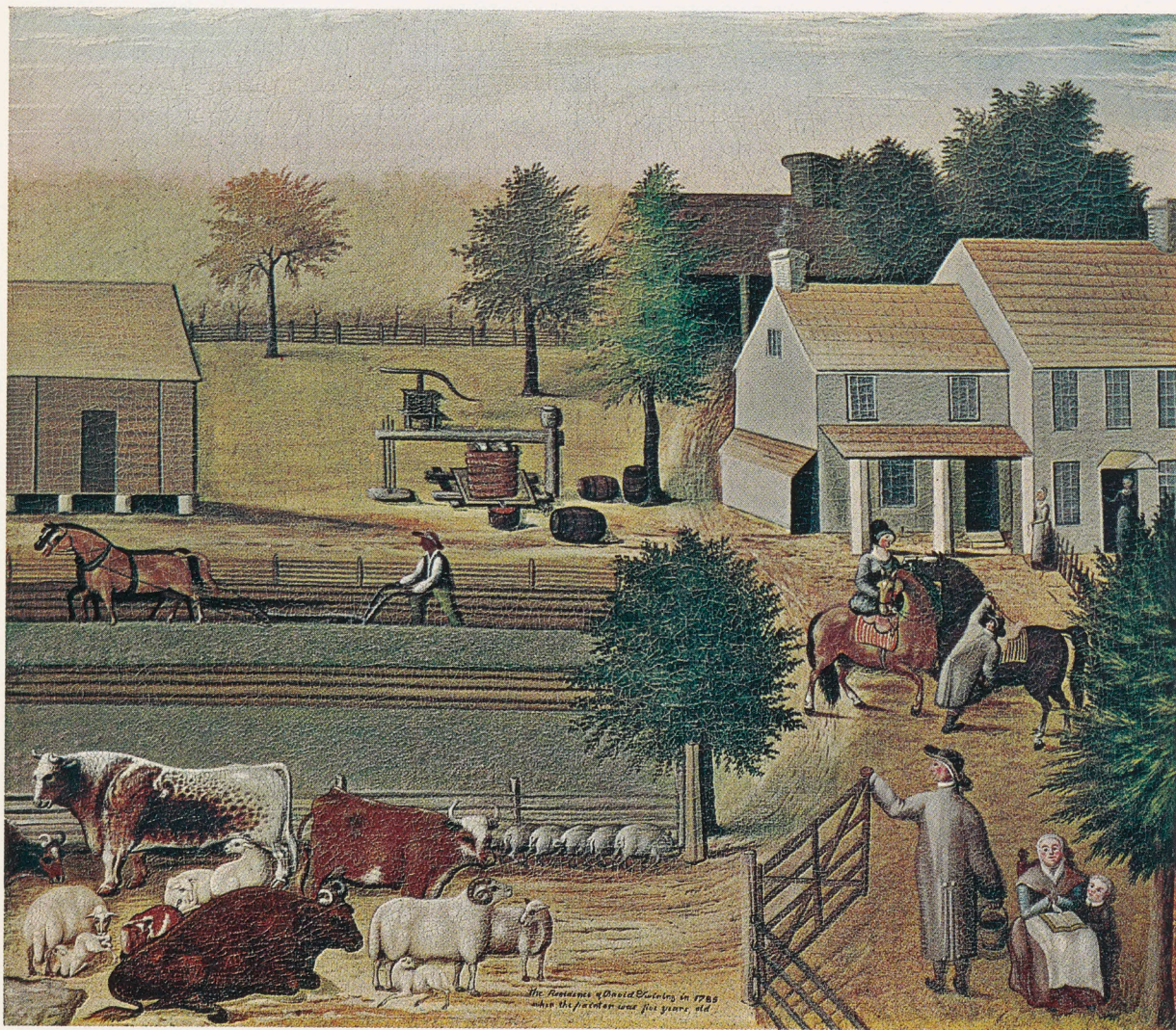
Inscribed on stretcher:
"Painted by Edward Hicks
in his 67 year"





The Peaceable Kingdom
1848
oil on canvas
24 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 28 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches

Lent by
Mr. and Mrs. Martin B. Grossman



The Residence of David Twining
in 1785
c. 1845-48
oil on canvas
26¼ x 29⅞ inches

Lent by
Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute,
Howard N. Eavenson
Memorial Fund



The Peaceable Kingdom
c. 1848
oil on canvas
17 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 23 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches

Lent by
Philadelphia Museum of Art,
Bequest of Lisa Norris Elkins





The Peaceable Kingdom
1849
oil on canvas
24 x 30 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches

Lent by
Galerie St. Etienne



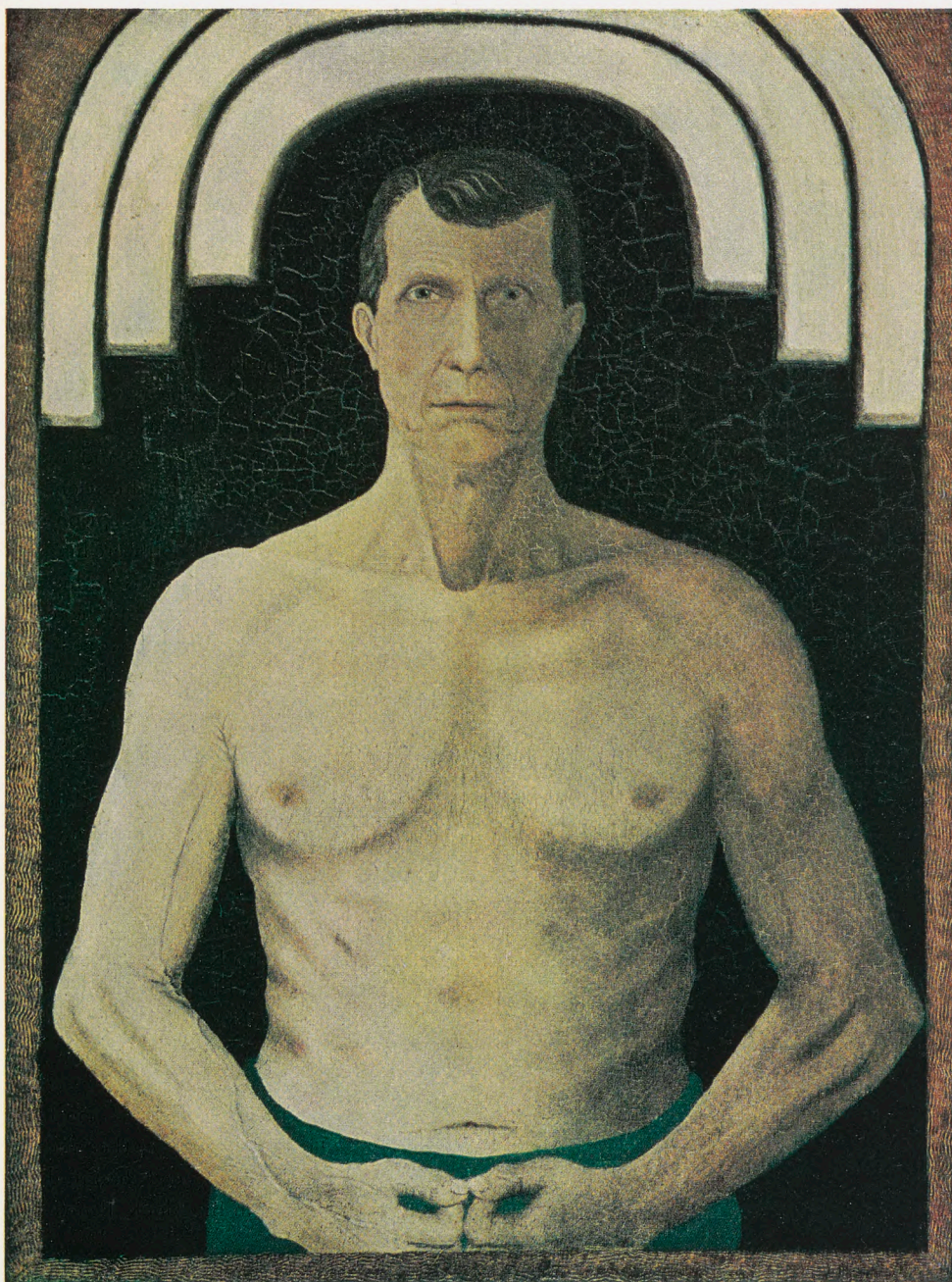
1860-1934

"Few careers in the long history of art have been more singular than that of John Kane. Everything in it seems to have come from the other side of probability. Search Vasari's *Lives of the Artists* from beginning to end, and you will find in them no more magnificent paradox than this: that an immigrant day-laborer, who had no time to paint, no money to paint, no earthly provocation or encouragement to paint, should emerge, at the age of sixty-seven, as the most significant painter America has produced during the past quarter-century."

So began Frank Crowninshield's foreword to *Sky Hooks*, the autobiography of John Kane as recorded by the late Marie McSwigan during the last years of the painter's life. Told with candor, humor, and much warmth, it is the story of a man of little education who developed a profound wisdom and perception in life and in art. Poverty and incessant toil were his lot, and he accepted it without any illusions. In his last years when recognition was given to him, he rejoiced in it, but he knew his worth and it changed him little; rather it provided the impetus and freedom of assurance to further his art. Of his life he wrote, "It is in the main a simple story but like my paintings it contains many details."

Born of Irish parentage in West Calder, Scotland, on August 19, 1860, he was baptized John Cain. Years later a bank clerk in Akron, Ohio, wrote his name as John Kane, and thereafter he adopted this spelling. Not unlike Pippin's *My Life's Story* (see section on Horace Pippin), John Kane begins his tale with his first recollection; that of being punished at school for distracting the class by drawing. When he was ten years old, his father died, leaving a widow and seven children. Kane quit school to work in the coal mines while he was in "the third reader." His mother remarried, and in 1879 he joined his stepfather and older brother, Patrick, who had preceded the family to America and were working in Braddock, Pennsylvania.

His first job was gandy-dancing, tamping down rocks between the ties of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad at McKeesport. From there Kane worked at the National Tube Company. He left McKeesport



Self-Portrait
1929
oil on canvas
over composition board
36 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 27 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches

Lent by
The Museum of Modern Art,
Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund

for Connellsville to try his fortune in the coke region of western Pennsylvania, returning to Braddock when he learned his mother and the remainder of his family would be arriving in the United States. Here he helped dig foundations for an addition to the Edgar Thomson Steel Works and for the Westinghouse plant at East Pittsburgh. He subsequently worked seven days a week at the Bessemer blast furnaces.

Shuttling from job to job in the ever-insecure labor market, sometimes destitute, always poor, John Kane was one of millions of unskilled and semiskilled laborers who literally built the industrial might of the United States. He took great pride in his work, in his physical strength, and in his adopted country. "As a boy in Scotland I had always thought that 'a man's a man,' as our poet Burns tells. If he was good at his work he was a good man."

Between 1884 and 1886 Kane mined coal in Alabama, Tennessee, and Kentucky. His body, tempered by strenuous labor, was spare and muscular. He stood six feet tall and weighed under 180 pounds. He loved to box, a sport he favored even after he lost a leg. It was at Glenmary, Tennessee, that he had a moment of glory. A professional boxer arrived at the local saloon asking whether anyone might be willing to fight four or five rounds in a practice bout. Kane accepted the challenge. There were no knockdowns, and, when it was over, it was called a draw. "He was five or six years younger than I and I was pretty powerful. I knew I could do away with him if I wanted to." The boxer was Jim Corbett, then not well-known, but the man destined to defeat the great John L. Sullivan for the heavyweight championship of the world.

Wanting to be close to his family, Kane returned to Braddock in 1887 and once again mined coal in the nearby Connellsville area. In 1890 he started to work as a street paver in Pittsburgh and McKeesport. In later years Kane would point to streets in his paintings that "I paved." At about this time he began to sketch things that interested him—mills, industrial plants, highways, and surrounding landscapes. As John O'Connor, Jr., (former Assistant Director of Fine Arts at Carnegie Institute) pointed out, Kane's pencil drawings were poor; "it was too late for that cal-

loused hand to draw with precision and flare." Sketching became a habit, one he was to keep throughout his life.

While walking along the railroad tracks of the Baltimore and Ohio, Kane was struck by an engine running without lights and lost his left leg, cut off five inches below the knee. He was thirty-one years old. Not given to self-pity, he learned to wear an artificial leg, and only in his last years were people aware of his disability. Incapable of obtaining a laboring job following his release from the hospital, Kane became a watchman for the Baltimore and Ohio at thirty-five dollars a month. There he remained for eight years.

In 1897 Kane married Maggie Halloran at St. Mary's at the Point in Pittsburgh. "I was still making only thirty-five dollars a month, but she didn't mind that. Not Maggie Halloran. She was willing to be poor with me." They lived in McKeesport. Following the birth of their first child, Mary, Kane left his job at the B. & O. and started painting steel railroad cars at the Pressed Steel Car Company in McKees Rocks. It was at McKees Rocks that a second daughter, Margaret, was born.

During lunch hours, when he would draw on the side of a car and fill in the colors, Kane realized his first opportunity to create paintings in oil. Lunch over, the picture disappeared beneath the monotonous, standard railroad car paint. "I had just learned the use of color in my art work."

With the closing of the Pressed Steel plant, Kane transferred to the Standard Steel Car Company at Butler, Pennsylvania, where he worked until the Panic of 1907 shut down that plant. He began to support his family by enlarging and coloring photographs. It was in Butler that his son, John, was born. The child lived only one day. John Kane could face poverty, loss of limb, and the erratic, strenuous life of an itinerant laborer, but the death of a son he had prayed for was the greatest blow of his life. He took to drinking heavily, and, in despair, his wife left him. Except for brief intervals during the following twenty-five years, they were to lead separate lives. He would rejoin his family for several months, then disappear for years.

The great depression of 1907 was the bitterest time of Kane's life. For seven weeks he slept on the floor of the Salvation Army building in Pittsburgh. There was no work to be had, and he grieved for his son. "But discouraged and all as I was I never lost the idea that I wanted to paint beautiful pictures." Kane painted portraits of the janitor and his wife who had permitted him to remain in the Salvation Army building during the freezing winter weather. In turn, the janitor found Kane a job painting houses in Dormont (suburban Pittsburgh). He did odd jobs and also worked at painting two amusement parks. Next he secured work as a house painter in Charleston, West Virginia, where he tried to enter an art school but could not afford the tuition since he was earning only two dollars a day. He had attempted to enroll at the Carnegie Institute of Technology when its art school was first opened, but the cost of materials and tuition were too high. Another opportunity for formal art instruction came just before this country's entry into World War I, when an instructor in the Cleveland School of Art made arrangements for him to attend night classes. By this time, however, Kane was working such long and irregular hours that he had to turn down the offer.

In Youngstown, Ohio, Kane became a carpenter's apprentice in order to augment his earnings during the winter months when house painting jobs ceased. He became skilled in his new trade. He moved to Akron, Ohio, in 1910 and was employed there in the construction of the Firestone, Goodyear, Goodrich, and General Tire Company plants. "I preferred to paint. But if there was no painting to be done I could fall back on my full-fledged carpenter's card to show. I was never sorry I learned this work. Like outdoor painting, it helped me with my art. It has been said that I am able to apply a technical knowledge to my industrial scenes, my paintings of steel mills, furnaces, pipe factories and of buildings of all sorts. Another man might paint a plant that could never stand up. But not I. I know how that building is erected for I have worked on every part of it, from digging the foundations to the entire structure. Floor by floor I know how it goes up. I can see where the foundations

come in and I take that into account when I am painting the surrounding details. If I paint a building you may be sure it sits square on solid foundations and is built according to the laws of construction which take into consideration the laws of nature and of gravity."

Kane's "pictorial" paintings date from his stay in Akron. Beaverboard odds and ends that were discarded by the construction crew became an economical surface for the paintings he worked on at night and on Sundays. None of the oils of this period has been recorded, and it is difficult, if not impossible, to date Kane's works prior to 1928. There are several versions of *The Steel Farm*, one of which, completed before 1910, was the first painting he sold.

Following his work in Akron, Kane returned to Pittsburgh, then went to Dauphin County in central Pennsylvania. He was struck by the great beauty of that area, especially the Susquehanna River near Harrisburg, and years later painted some of the scenes from memory. While working as a carpenter at the Cambria Steel Works in Johnstown, Kane began what he describes as "the oldest of my works that I know about, the oldest that exists for a certainty today. It is *Lincoln's Gettysburg Address**, word for word and letter for letter against an American Flag as a background. In one corner I painted Lincoln's head. On the reverse, the back of the canvas, I made a very small portrait of Washington with the words, 'Let us raise a standard to which all men can repair. The event is in the hand of God.'

"Now Washington's words were packed with wisdom. They were honest, simple and direct. But Lincoln's words, I have always considered, contained thoughts among the most beautiful ever expressed in speech or writing. His address is, to my mind, among the greatest works of great men. Abraham Lincoln has always been a hero to me.

"I believe he was a healthy robust young fellow like myself, in his young days and mine. He started life as I did, without anything except what he got for himself. He had no schooling but what he worked for. And so I have always thought he was pretty much like myself, strong of body, willing to work and with-

out the advantages that have helped other men.

"Now Abraham Lincoln has a message for the artist as well as for everyone else. Nothing is denied to well-directed labor. Nothing is obtained without it. And that, Abraham Lincoln always stood for.

"For of greater importance than technical accomplishment, I have always held, is that unity of handiwork with deep convictions, profound thought and lofty taste that, working together, create a great work of art."

Throughout *Sky Hooks*, Kane refers to "beauty." For him, beauty was not detached from everyday life; he found it in the written word, in the poetry of Robert Burns, the Bible, the Gettysburg Address. It was in the melodies he played on his tin flute. He sought it in people's faces, in the natural world of forests, hills, and rivers, and in the accomplishments of man. "You don't have to go far to find beauty. It is all over, everywhere, even in the street on which you work. All you need is observation. You must look for beauty and you will find it."

Prior to America's entry into World War I, Kane was employed by the John F. Casey Company in Pittsburgh and in Cleveland. With the United States' declaration of war, Kane, now fifty-seven, journeyed to Camp Sherman to enlist. "Too old, Dad," was the answer, but he worked at the camp as a carpenter. From there he was sent to Harrisburg to construct a storehouse and, upon its completion, returned to Pittsburgh to make shells for the Westinghouse company. After the Armistice, Kane did odd jobs and in 1922 obtained work with a construction gang engaged in building the Beechwood Boulevard Bridge. Next he worked in the Homewood streetcar barns as a carpenter, and, when that firm went into receivership, he found what he called "the best job I ever had" at the Sheet and Tin Plate Works of the National Tube Company, painting offices and decorating them to his own taste. After he had been there two years, the plant closed, and he returned to house painting until 1930, when he was seventy, giving this up "only because it was so scarce."

Kane was living in rented rooms at 1711 Liberty Avenue in Pittsburgh, in an area known as "the strip,"

*There are two versions of the painting. The second, (No. 46), was the larger. It was completed about 1927 and was never sold during his lifetime. The earlier painting is reproduced in *Touching Up* (No. 69).

when he painted *Scene in the Scottish Highlands*, the work that was first to bring him fame. He had submitted paintings to the 1925* and 1926 Carnegie International exhibitions (now known as the Pittsburgh International Exhibition of Contemporary Painting and Sculpture), but his works were rejected. However, in 1927 the Jury of Admissions, consisting of Andrew Dasburg, Henry Lee McFee, Abram Poole, Eugene Savage, Eugene Speicher, and Horatio Walker, accepted *Scene in the Scottish Highlands*. Dasburg not only insisted on its inclusion but purchased the painting for fifty dollars to show his good faith.

The sudden emergence of the sixty-seven-year-old untaught laborer as an artist worthy of admission to an International (there were 400 entries and most of the major painters of the decade were represented) was heralded in the press. He was visited by dealers. Newspaper writers and photographers descended upon him, and his story was exploited nationally.

Kane had been painting a house in Ingram when the letter advising him of his acceptance arrived. "When you walk the way of life all your days with the poor, as I have, one honor the more, one rebuff the less, is nothing. For myself, the Carnegie Institute Exhibition was a little matter. I was content. I was proud and glad to have this recognition at last. But beyond that it was of little importance. I have had too many hardships in a long life. I have lived too long the life of the poor to attach undue importance to the honors of the art world or to any honors that come from man and not from God." For the next three years he continued his trade, since recognition did not bring many sales.

Shortly after the exhibition opened, Mrs. Kane, who had completely lost contact with her husband for ten years and was living with her younger daughter in Virginia, saw his picture in a New York newspaper. Neither had known whether the other was still alive. She returned to Pittsburgh, and they remained together during the last seven years of his life.

Kane was included in all the Carnegie Internationals from 1927 through 1934. He joined the Associated Artists of Pittsburgh in 1928 and exhibited regularly with that group, winning second prize in

38

1928, the Carnegie Institute Award in 1929 for the best three or more works, and first prize in 1933 for *Liberty Bridge, Pittsburgh*.

His sudden success brought on detractors—the academic painters who scoffed at his technical deficiencies and the Pittsburgh artists who were startled by the acclaim given to a mere "Sunday painter." Henry McBride, art critic of the *New York Sun*, championed Kane. In 1930 he wrote, "John Kane of Pittsburgh is a house painter who paints only in his hours of ease. His uninstructed but genuinely poetic pictures found their way into the Pittsburgh International, where they were singled out for praise by the New York critics. Pittsburgh was somewhat surprised at this, but has become resigned to having a 'man of feeling' in its midst."

The following year McBride added, "John Kane's picture, *Monongahela Valley*, is one of the truest works of art in the entire exhibition and much more essentially valuable than young Mr. Watkins' stylish affair (*Suicide in Costume*). To have given this picture the first prize would have made clear to the large public what has been clear to the smaller world of connoisseurs for some time, the true worth of this admirable poet and painter."

The Harvard Society of Contemporary Art exhibited five of Kane's oils in 1929. A sixth painting, representing a full-length nude self-portrait including his artificial leg and intricate straps that held it in place, was rejected. Upon its return, Kane painted over the original his *Brother Patrick in the Uniform of the Black Watch*.

Kane's works were now borrowed by museums, including The Toledo Museum of Art (1930), The Museum of Modern Art (1930 and 1934), the Addison Gallery of American Art (1932), the Whitney Museum of American Art (for its first and second Biennials in 1932 and 1934), and The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (1932, 1933, and 1934). In 1931 his first New York one-man exhibition took place at the Contemporary Arts Galleries, where twenty paintings were shown. A year later Manfred Schwartz exhibited Kane's works in his Gallery 144. Edward Duff Balken, John Dewey, Leon Kroll, Mrs.

**The Lost Boy Found in the Temple*, because it was a copy of another painting, was not submitted to the Jury of Admissions by Homer Saint-Gaudens.

John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and G. David Thompson were among the first to buy his paintings. The Phillips Memorial Gallery in Washington acquired *Across the Strip* in 1930, thus becoming the first museum to own a Kane. 53

The Kanes had moved to Ophelia Street in the Oakland section of Pittsburgh in 1931. Both had had streetcar accidents, and, for the first time, Kane felt old and tired. He devoted himself exclusively to painting on the sun porch of the apartment, "John's glory hole," as Mrs. Kane called it. He was a slow painter, working on a picture for months before he felt it was completed. Knowing when a work was finished was as difficult for Kane as for most artists. He would add to paintings while they were on exhibition. Kane had been working on *Crossing the Junction*, which was shown in the 1934 Carnegie International, at the time of his death, and, though it is unfinished and unsigned, it would be difficult to discover how it might be amplified. 81

When the Junior League of Pittsburgh offered him his first one-man show in the spring of 1931, Kane had few works on hand. Twenty oils had been shipped to New York for an exhibition in September of that year, and others were out on loan. Not satisfied with the number he offered, the Junior League pressed him for others, and Kane relinquished some of his early studies that were painted over photographs. He had no concept of the right or wrong of the matter. A Pittsburgh painter, guessing the nature of the pictures, went to the Hearst newspaper, *The Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph*, which in turn purchased one of the copies and removed part of the paint to reveal the original photograph. Not to be outdone, *The Pittsburgh Press* followed suit, and John Kane was "exposed."

Kane was bewildered. He was a man of integrity, and the implied fraud rankled deeply. The President of Carnegie Institute, Samuel Harden Church, advised the newspapers that this would not affect his relations with the museum. Pittsburgh industrialist and collector, G. David Thompson, championed Kane, as did Duncan Phillips, who wrote in defense of him to the *Sun-Telegraph*: "(Kane) . . . won the admiration

of the good judges of quality in art because in spite of lack of knowledge and training, he alone comes closer to the essentials of expression than the most competent professionals who resent his success." Fortunately the storm in the teacup soon blew over, but Kane had been deeply hurt. "It is true, the painting had been bought and the owner had the right to do anything he wanted with it. But it is my observation that he who destroys a thing another has labored to create murders a dead man."

The Ophelia Street house proved unsatisfactory, and the Kanes rented rooms above a shoemaker's shop at 1700 Fifth Avenue. It was here that he painted 74 *From My Studio Window*. Sidney Janis, in *They Taught Themselves* (The Dial Press, 1942), discusses this work and points out through photographs that Kane must have painted it from the front and side windows of both the second and third floors, taking tremendous license in the juxtaposition of the scene. This is actually true of most of his landscapes. In 80 *Panther Hollow, Pittsburgh*, we have been able to trace the site of his easel to a bluff above Swinburne Street. While the Carnegie Institute of Technology and Phipps Conservatory buildings are in true relationship to the hollow, many of the obvious landmarks have been shuffled. Kane often placed grazing cows where they could not readily have been, and it is dubious whether there was any vegetation near the railroad tracks even thirty-odd years ago. Note the improbable rabbits scurrying about the feet of 48 *Brother Patrick in the Uniform of the Black Watch*. He peopled his cityscapes with friends who readily identified themselves driving wagons or walking along the streets. Boyhood memories of Scotland became themes for a number of his oils. He painted *Balmoral Castle*, *Andrew Carnegie's Birthplace*, and *Balloch Castle*, and some of the Highlanders in his recurrent Scottish dances were friends he had left behind fifty years before, when he immigrated to America.

John Kane died on August 10, 1934. He had tuberculosis, a condition no one seemed to be aware of until his last days. He was buried in Calvary Cemetery in a plot of single graves adjacent to the area reserved for the St. Vincent de Paul Society for the Poor.

One of the pallbearers at Kane's funeral was John O'Connor, Jr., who on numerous occasions had befriended the artist and who in 1936 assembled forty-six oils for the John Kane Memorial Exhibition at Carnegie Institute. Mr. O'Connor wrote: "There were three realities for John Kane—God, nature, and himself. In his very limited and humble way he rejoiced, as few men have, in the world that God created; and he felt called, for the greater honor and glory of God, to transmit to his fellow men his impression of the small but glorious world his eyes encompassed."

Approximately one hundred and forty oils by John Kane have been recorded, a procedure complicated by repetition of subjects with only slight variations. Only occasionally did he date his canvases. He was indifferent to titling paintings, and a single work may have had two or three names. *Old Clinton Furnace* is an exception; it bears Kane's inimitable spelling and grammar, "Old Clinton Furness, Gone but not forgetting." No drawings have been found, and although he refers to working in pastel, no pictures in this medium have come to light.

Kane found a great need to recreate the world exactly as he saw it. Samuel Rosenberg relates the incident of Kane's leaving his easel site in Calvary Cemetery and trudging down the hillside to a small house in the valley below in order to identify the flowers planted in a window box. Kane has been often criticized for his attention to minutiae in his works—the countless delineated cobblestones in a street, the pains taken with a pictorially unimportant detail of a building—as though that in itself signified a naïve and crude painter. Yet this is the way he saw his surroundings. His many trades had made him aware of the fabrication of things. Once observed, they became an important element in his imagery. But, for all his concern with the world of construction, he was able to create a statement in paint that is altogether poetry. Henry McBride invariably spoke of him as a "poet," and it is this specific quality that makes John Kane a major artist of his time.

No artist had equaled John Kane in portraying the industrial scene. Steel mills are organic, monumental

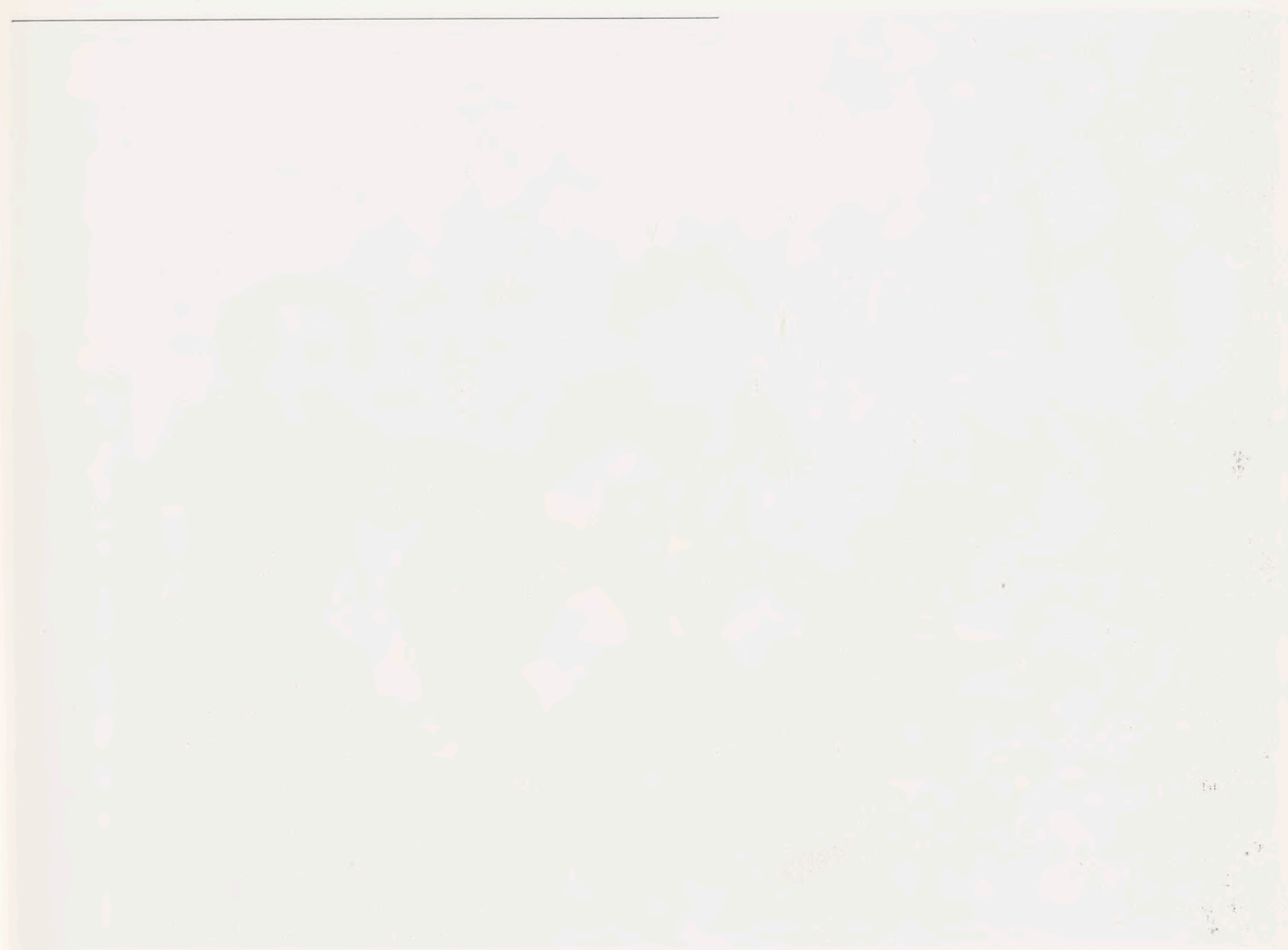
structures; railroad tracks have a purposeful yet graceful sweep through his paintings; and houses cluster together as though they had sprung forth from seeds planted in close, orderly rows. Smoke pours from the stacks of factories and river boats, providing a dynamic contrast to the serene green hills. The reflections of bridges in the rivers, as in *Homestead*, provide a contrapuntal pattern.

The Redon-like fantasy of the setting sun in *Sunset, Coleman Hollow* was a reality he literally saw, not a product of his mind's eye. Greyed clouds have a heavy shadow, and Kane painted them that way even though they made Frank Crowninshield feel that "If Kane's clouds were ever to crash to earth, they would produce a sound as of collapsing skyscrapers."

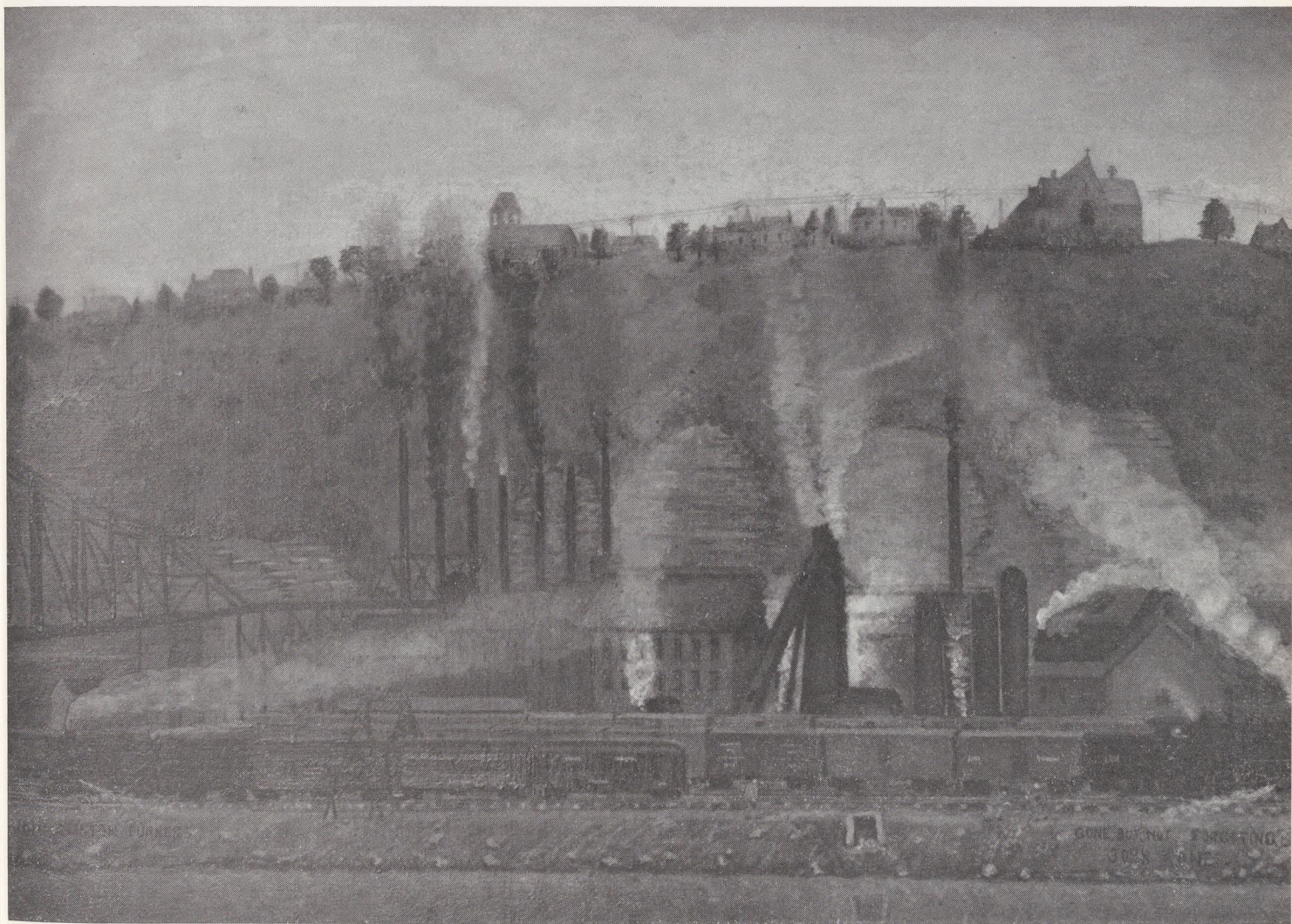
Self-Portrait is unquestionably one of the most moving works of its genre. Kane was sixty-nine years old when he painted himself, stripped to the waist, before a mirror. His was an aging but proudly strong body, keenly observed. One senses the layers of muscles and tendons beneath the skin. The veins in his hands and arms are pronounced, and the erect head strains the muscles of his throat. His lips are compressed, the hair carefully combed. The arched ornamental bars at the top of the painting center our attention on his eyes, which belie the realism of the torso and return us to the sensitive artist before the mirror. The formal arrangement of the hands counterbalances the architectural forms above, producing in all a composition of incredible sophistication. In *Pietà*, a modern dress version of the fifteenth-century School of Avignon painting, Kane portrays himself as the donor and adds a background of St. Paul's Cathedral in Pittsburgh. A third likeness appears in *Touching Up*. It is a brilliantly composed work, which is very reminiscent of Vuillard in its faithful recreation of his "studio," with its patterned wallpaper and closely hung paintings across the upper section. So strong is the concentration of the artist on his painting that the infinite detailing recedes into the background.

Unfortunately, one of the tendencies in contemporary criticism is a frantic need to lump artists into

categories and movements. This may provide the critic and historian with a certain amount of intellectual security, but it will not help them or the viewer to evaluate the genius of John Kane, who remains a lone, unclassified figure. Kane transcended his technical deficiencies by breathing into his works a rare personal poetry. To judge Kane by academic standards is to rebuke Giotto for his lack of perspective, or, more significant perhaps, to decry the mystique of art itself.



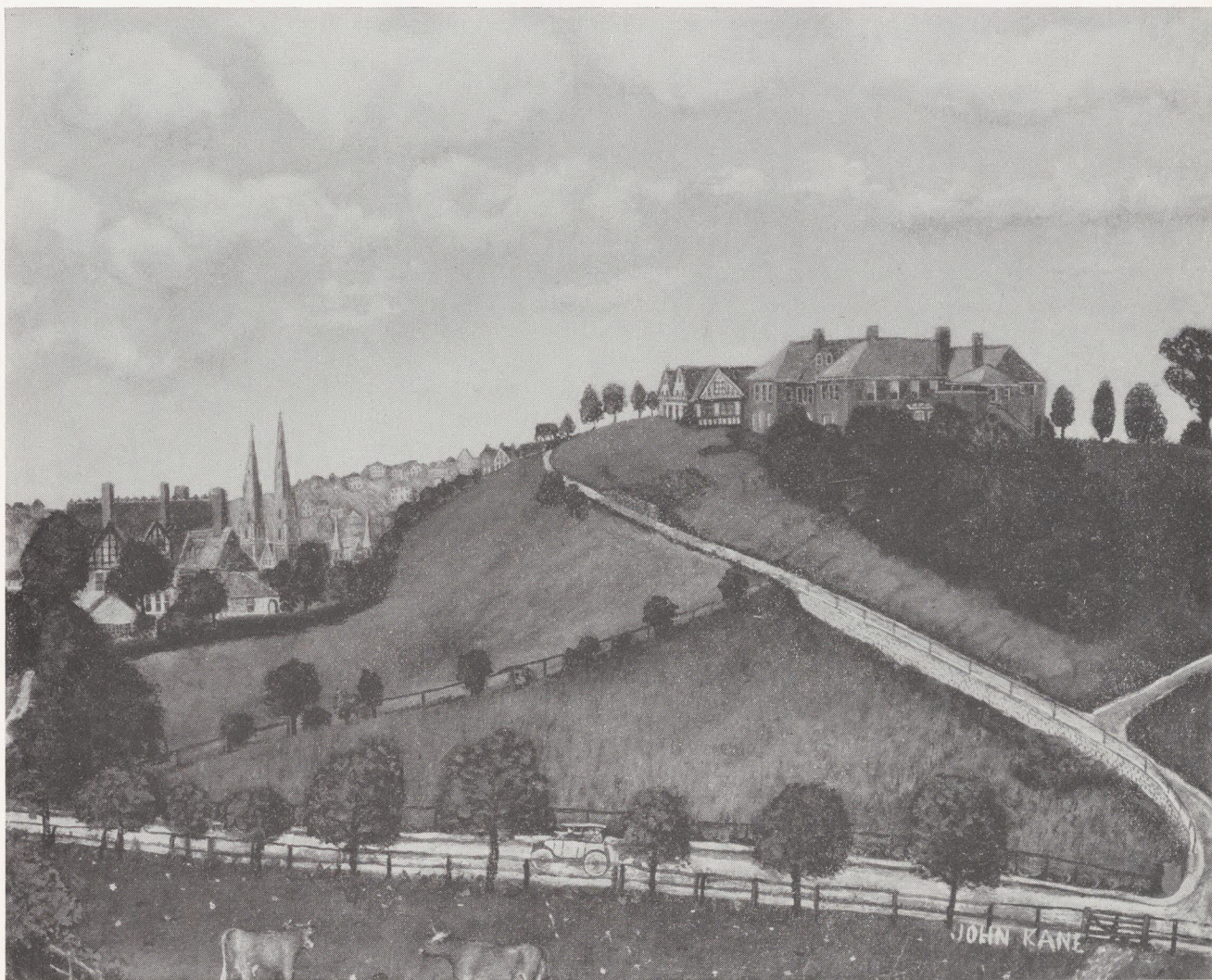




Old Clinton Furnace
not dated
oil on canvas
19½ x 27½ inches

Lent by
John Walker





Hill in Pittsburgh
1928
oil on board
18½ x 22½ inches

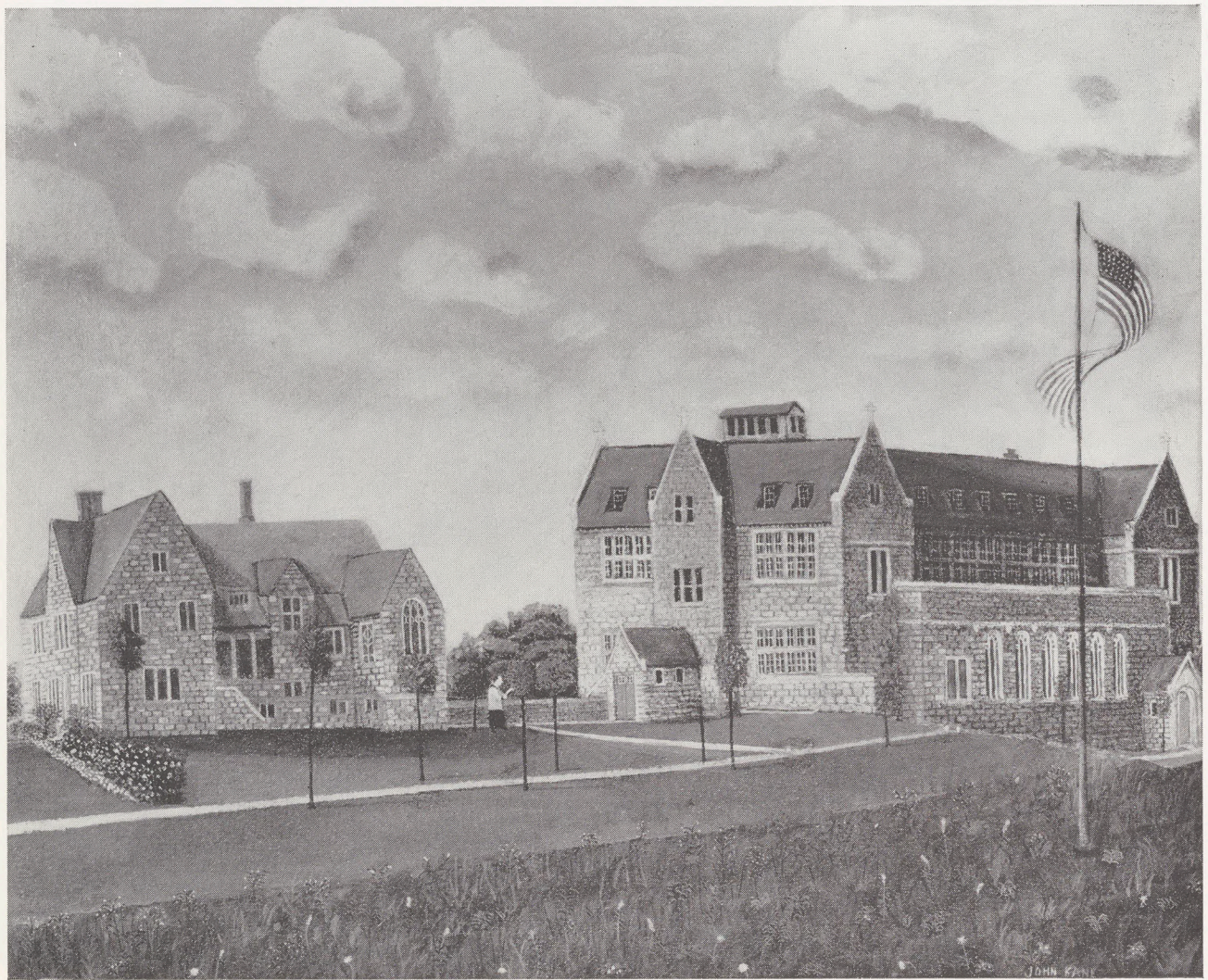
Lent by
The Knoedler Galleries

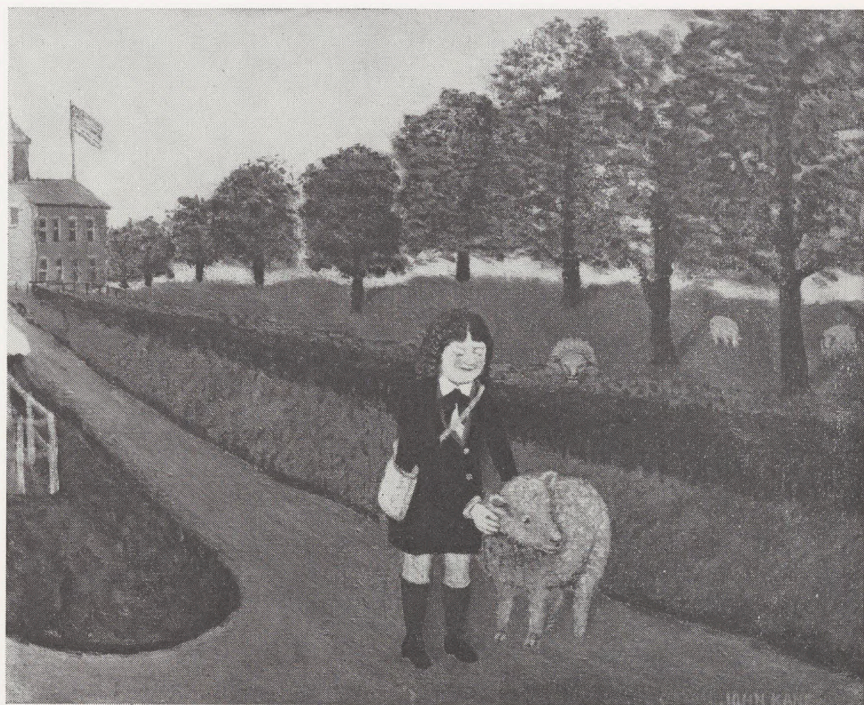




An Estate in Pittsburgh
1928
oil on canvas
13 x 16 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches

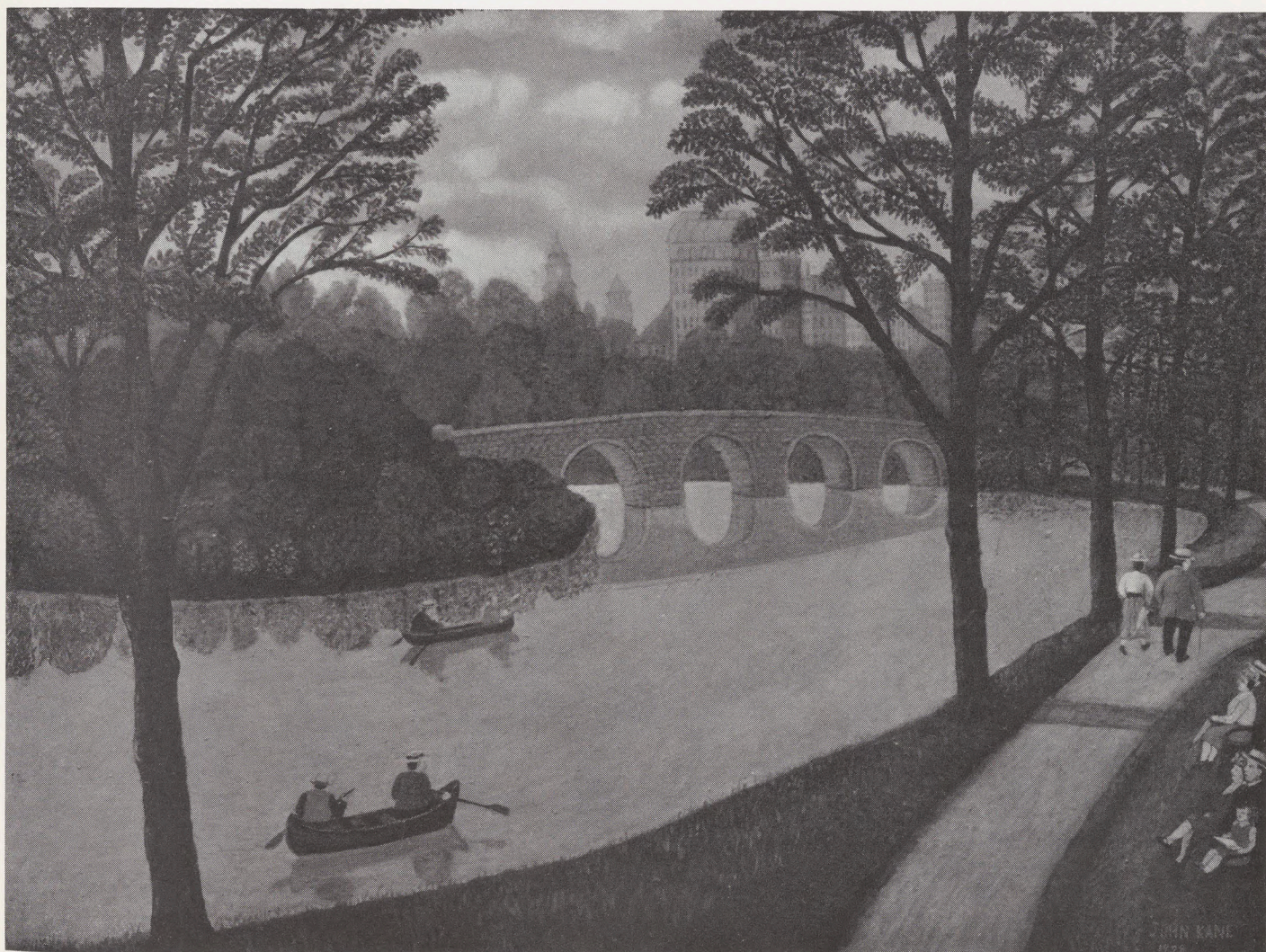
Lent by
W. C. Robinson, Jr.





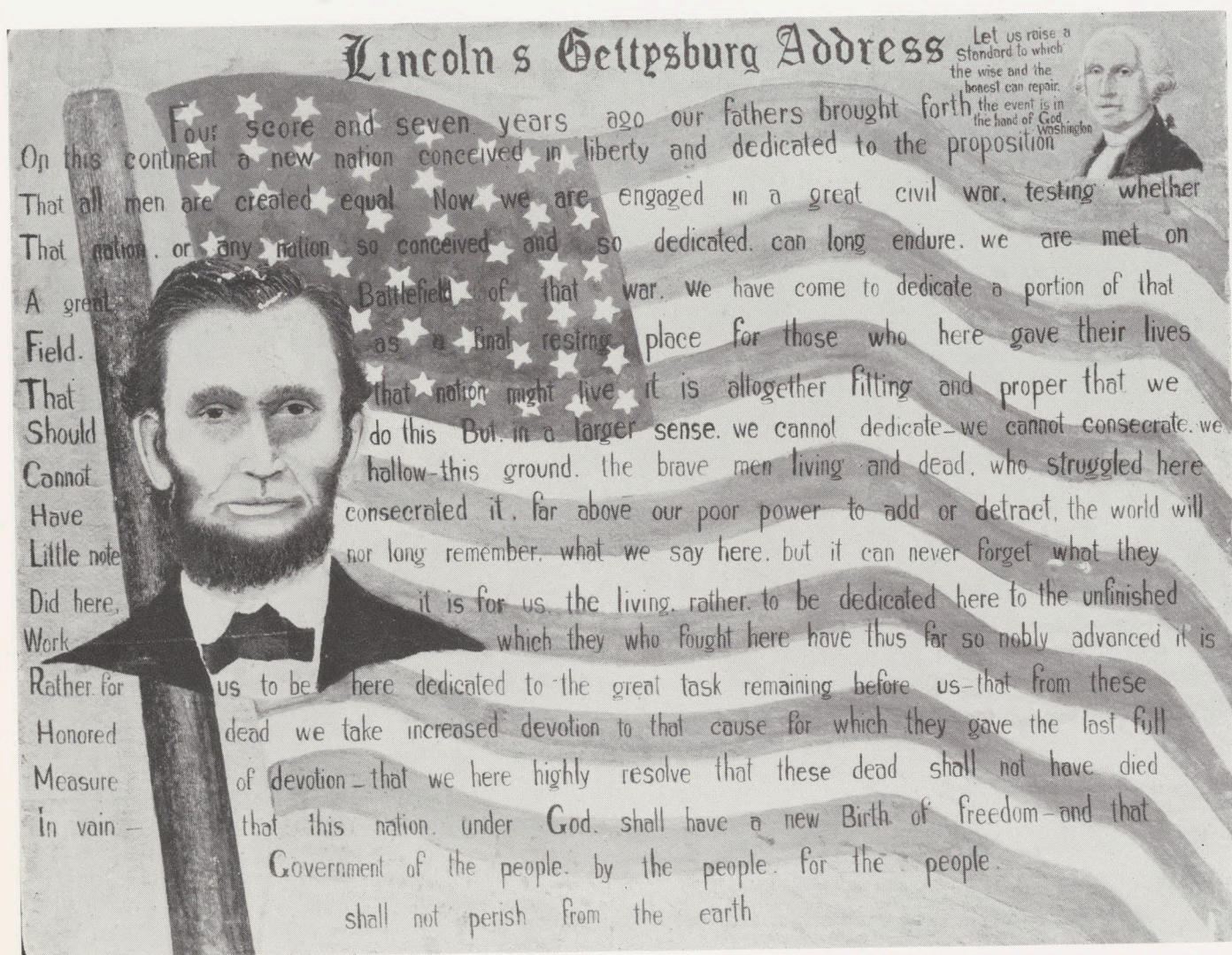
Mary's Little Lamb Lent by
not dated The Knoedler Galleries
oil on canvas
12 x 15 inches





Along the Susquehanna
1928
oil on canvas
25-5/16 x 32-3/16 inches

Lent by
William S. Paley

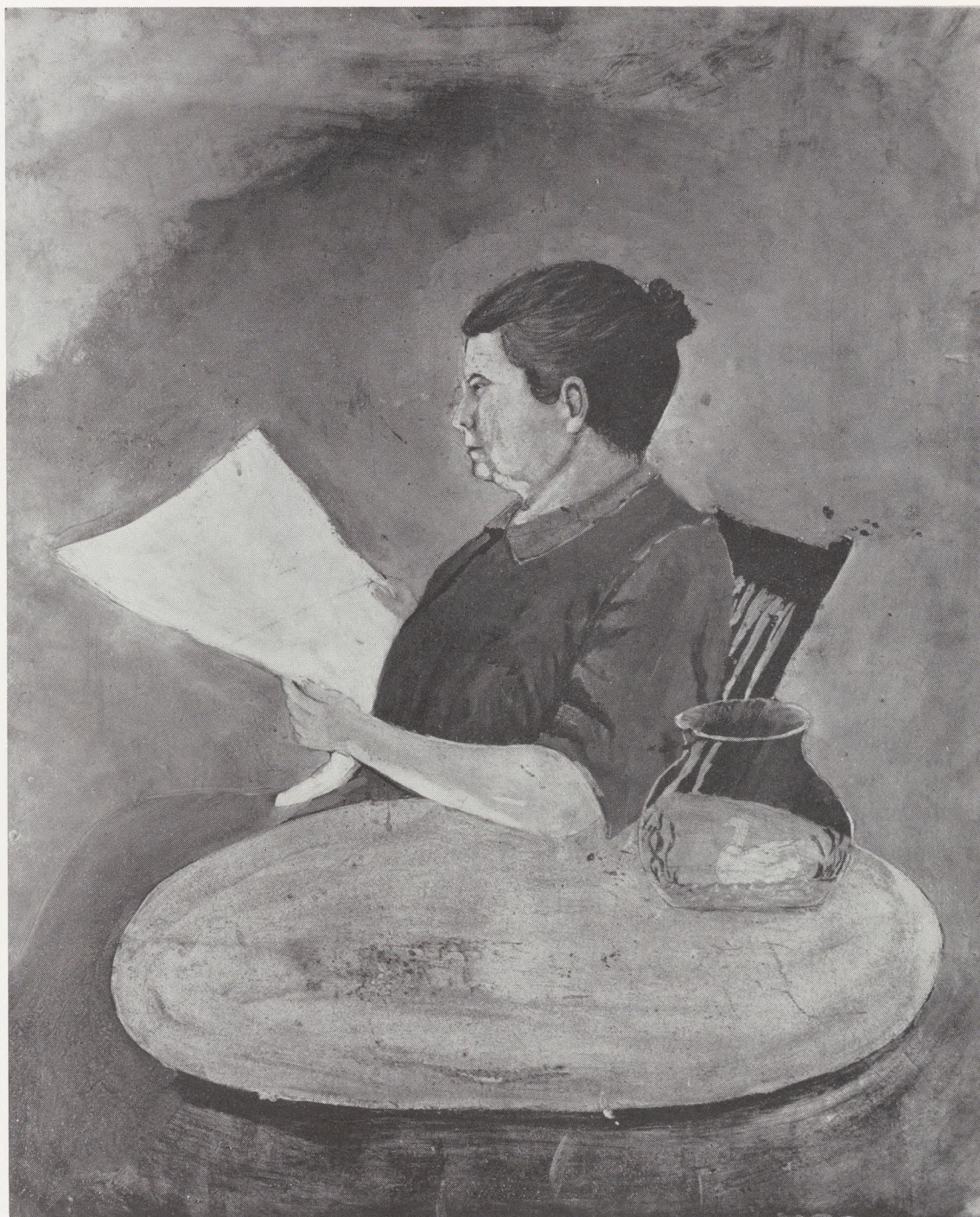




Ingram Mansion, Pittsburgh
not dated
oil on panel
20½ x 24½ inches

Lent by
Ernest Hillman, Jr.





Mrs. Kane Reading
not dated
oil on panel
24 x 20 inches

Lent by
The Knoedler Galleries





Highland Hollow
not dated
oil on canvas
26½ x 36½ inches

Lent by
Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute,
gift of Mr. and Mrs. Leland Hazard,
who retain life interest





Across the Strip
1929
oil on canvas
32¼ x 34¼ inches

Lent by
The Phillips Collection



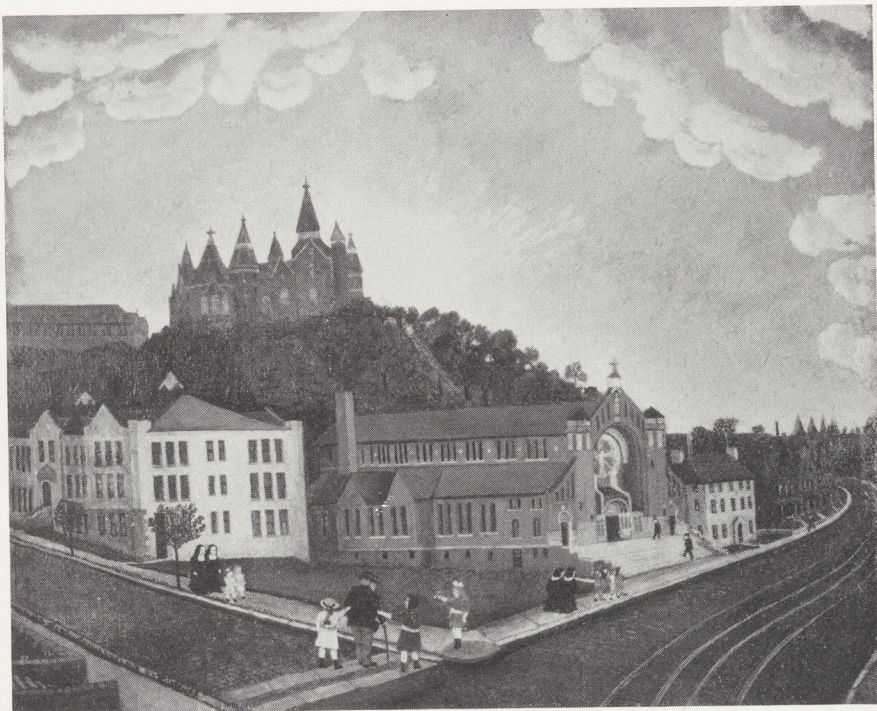


A Day of Rest
not dated
oil on masonite panel
14 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 20 inches

Lent by
Leon Kroll

for no. 55 see article, John Kane





Mount Mercy
not dated
oil on board
16 x 20 inches

Lent by
Mrs. James V. McDonough





The Old Elm
not dated
oil on canvas
21 x 25½ inches

Lent by
Miss Adelaide Milton de Groot

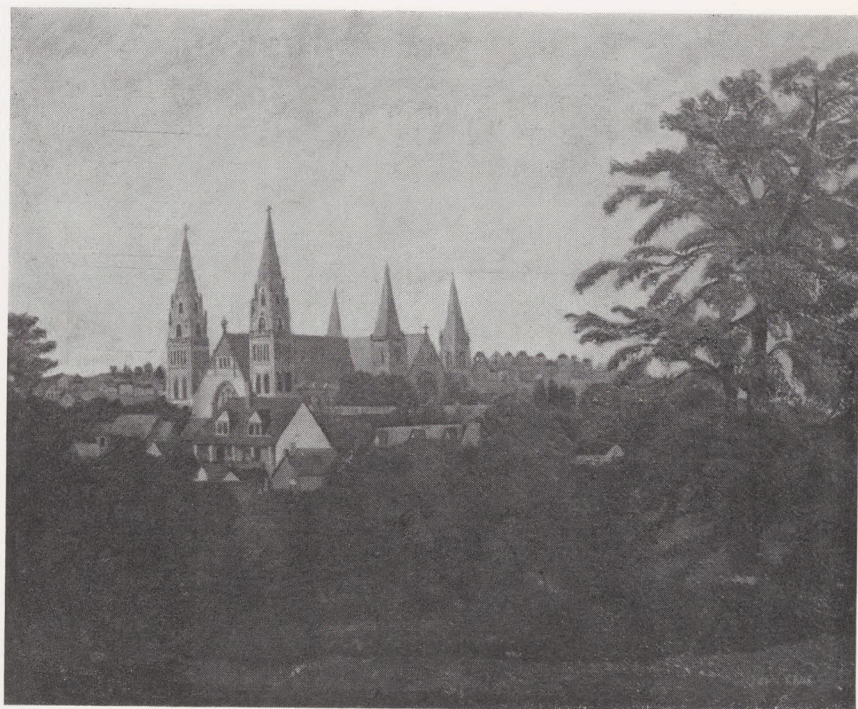




Lassie
1930-32
oil on canvas
34 x 24 inches

Lent by
The Knoedler Galleries

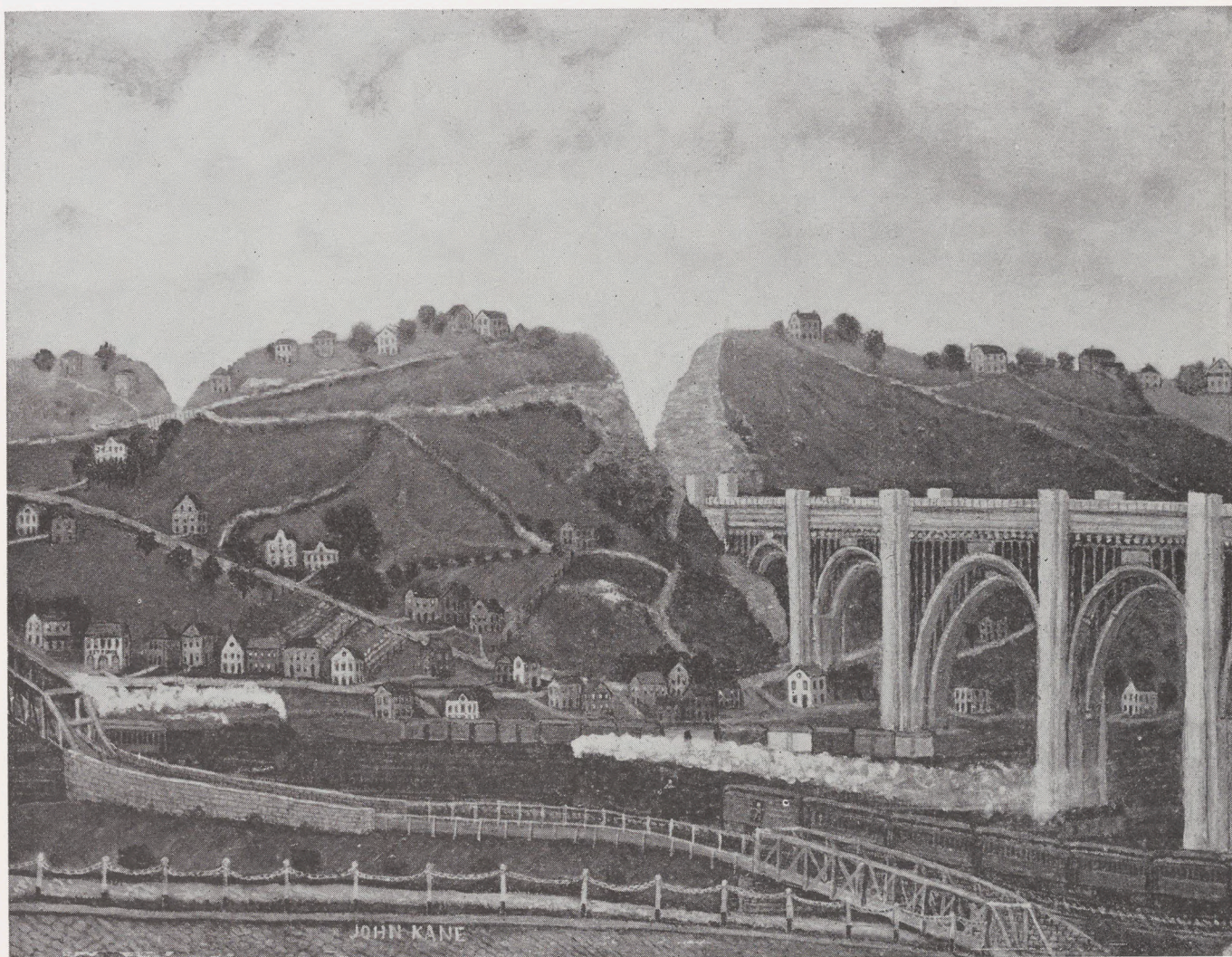




St. Paul's Cathedral, Pittsburgh
not dated
oil on canvas
15 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 19 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches

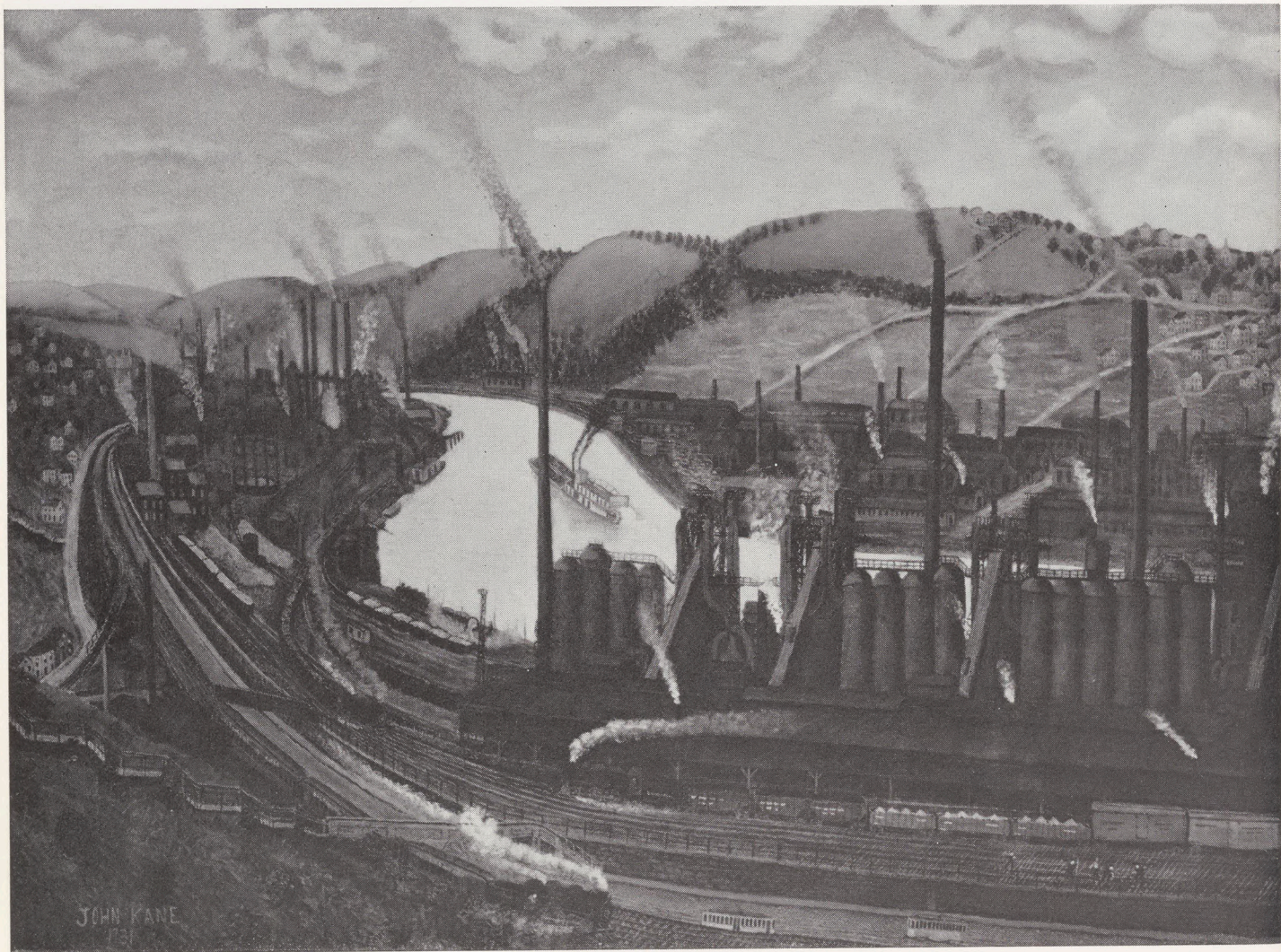
Lent by
Mr. and Mrs. Martin B. Grossman

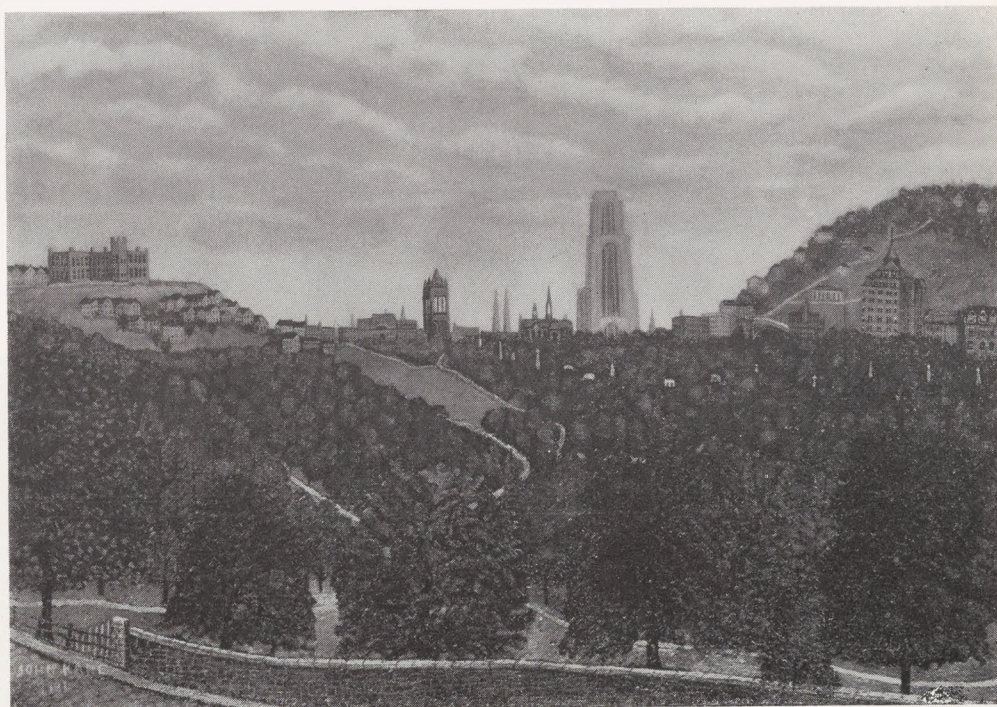




Turtle Creek Valley, No. 1
not dated
oil on canvas
19 x 25 inches

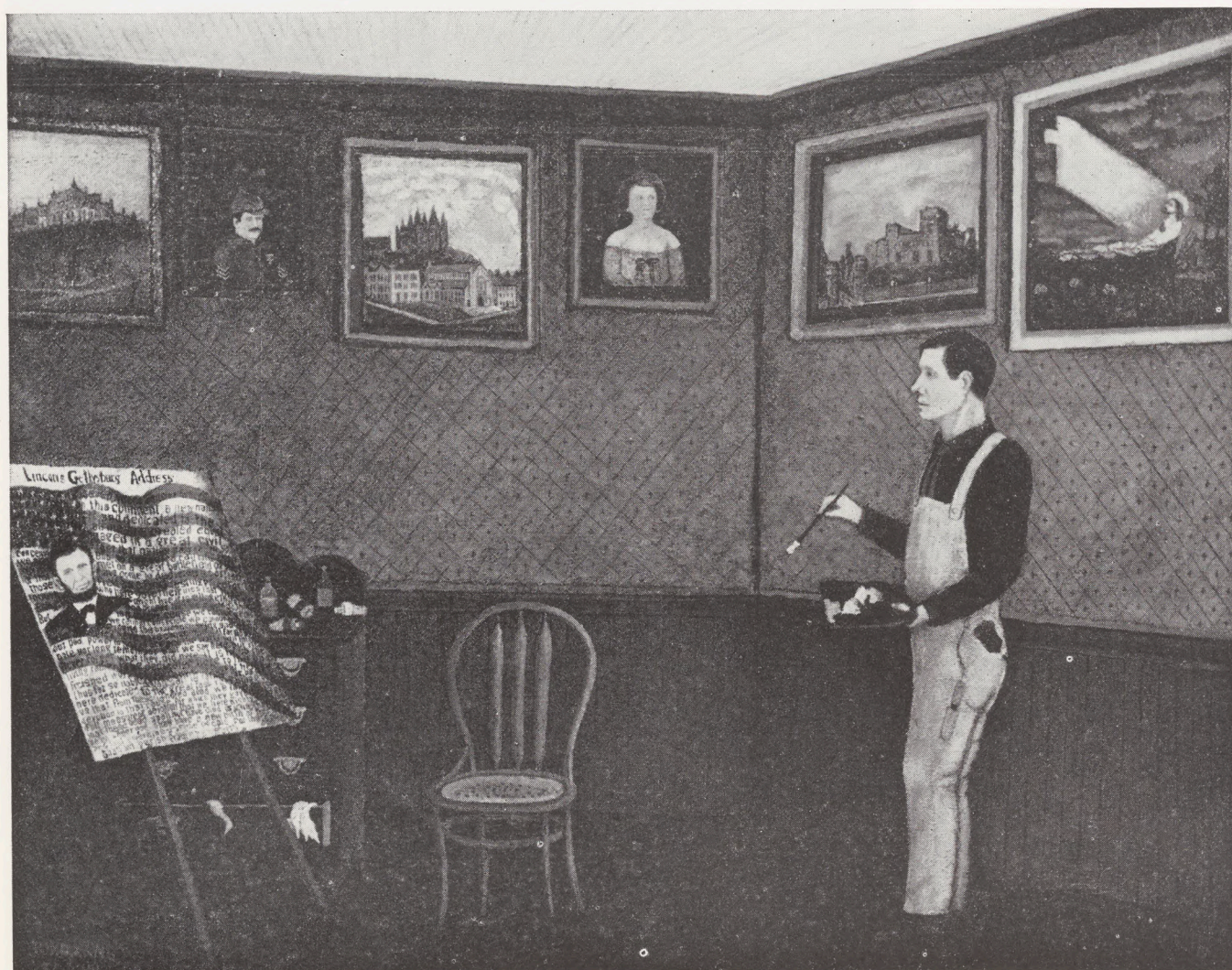
Lent by
Steven L. Rose





Garfield and Herron Hills
1931
oil on canvas
23½ x 32 inches

Lent by
The Knoedler Galleries





Sunset, Coleman Hollow
1930-31
oil on board
21½ x 23¾ inches

Lent by
Mr. and Mrs. James L. Winokur





Liberty Bridge, Pittsburgh
1932
oil on canvas
28 x 33 inches

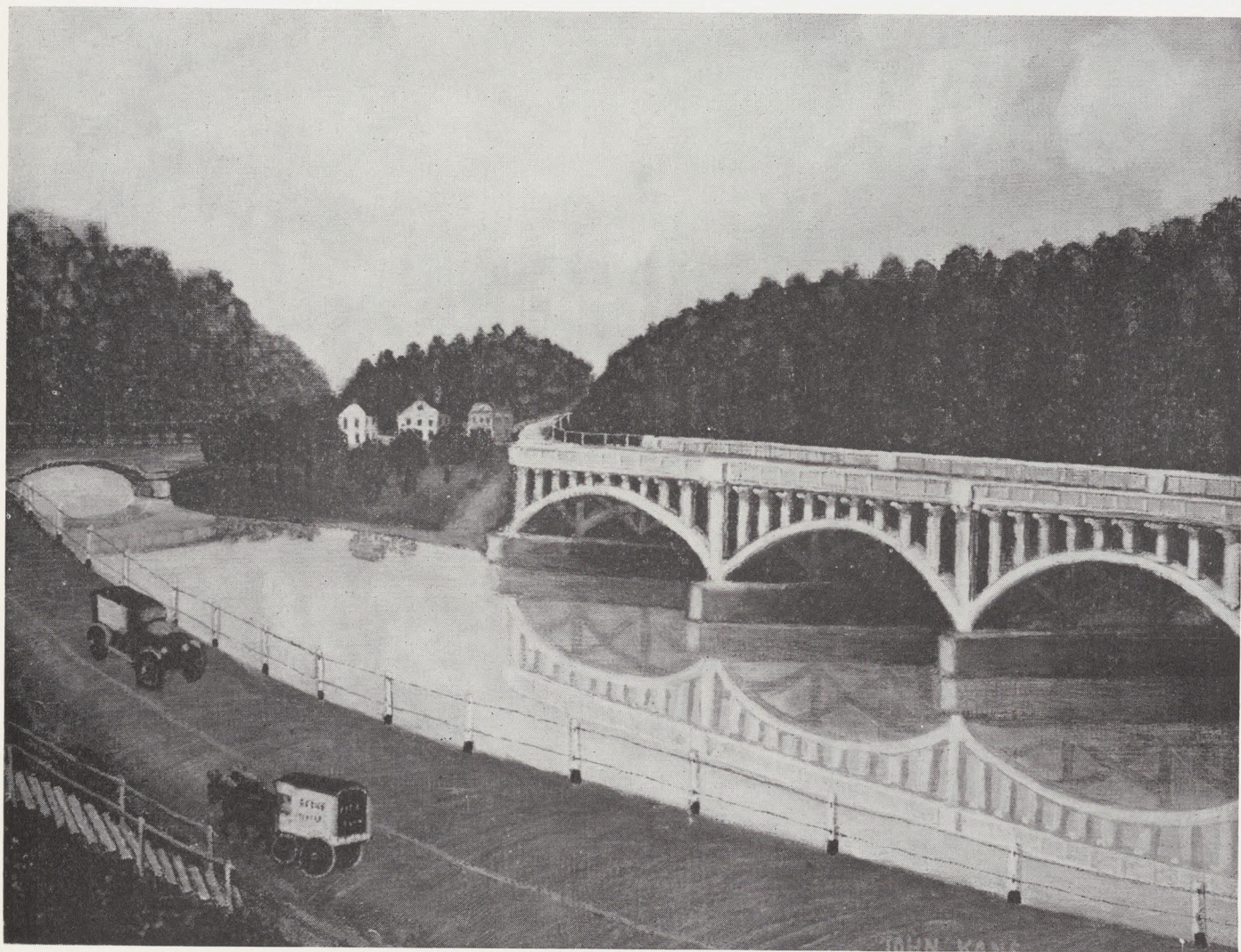
Lent by
Addison Gallery of American Art,
Phillips Academy





From My Studio Window
1932
oil on canvas
22¼ x 34½ inches

Lent by
Miss Adelaide Milton de Groot





Castle Shannon
c. 1932-34
oil on board
15 x 23 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches

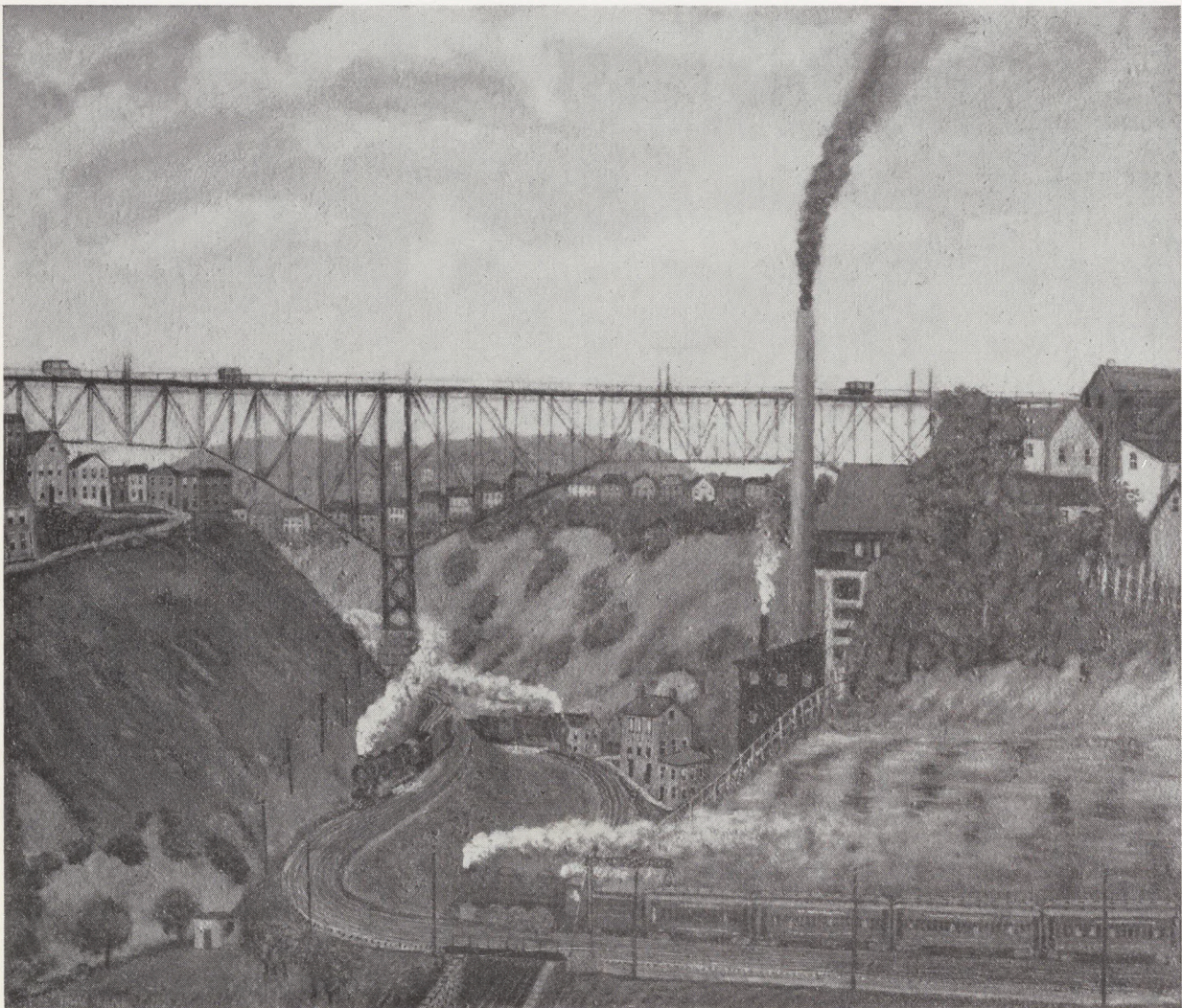
Lent by
Manfred Schwartz

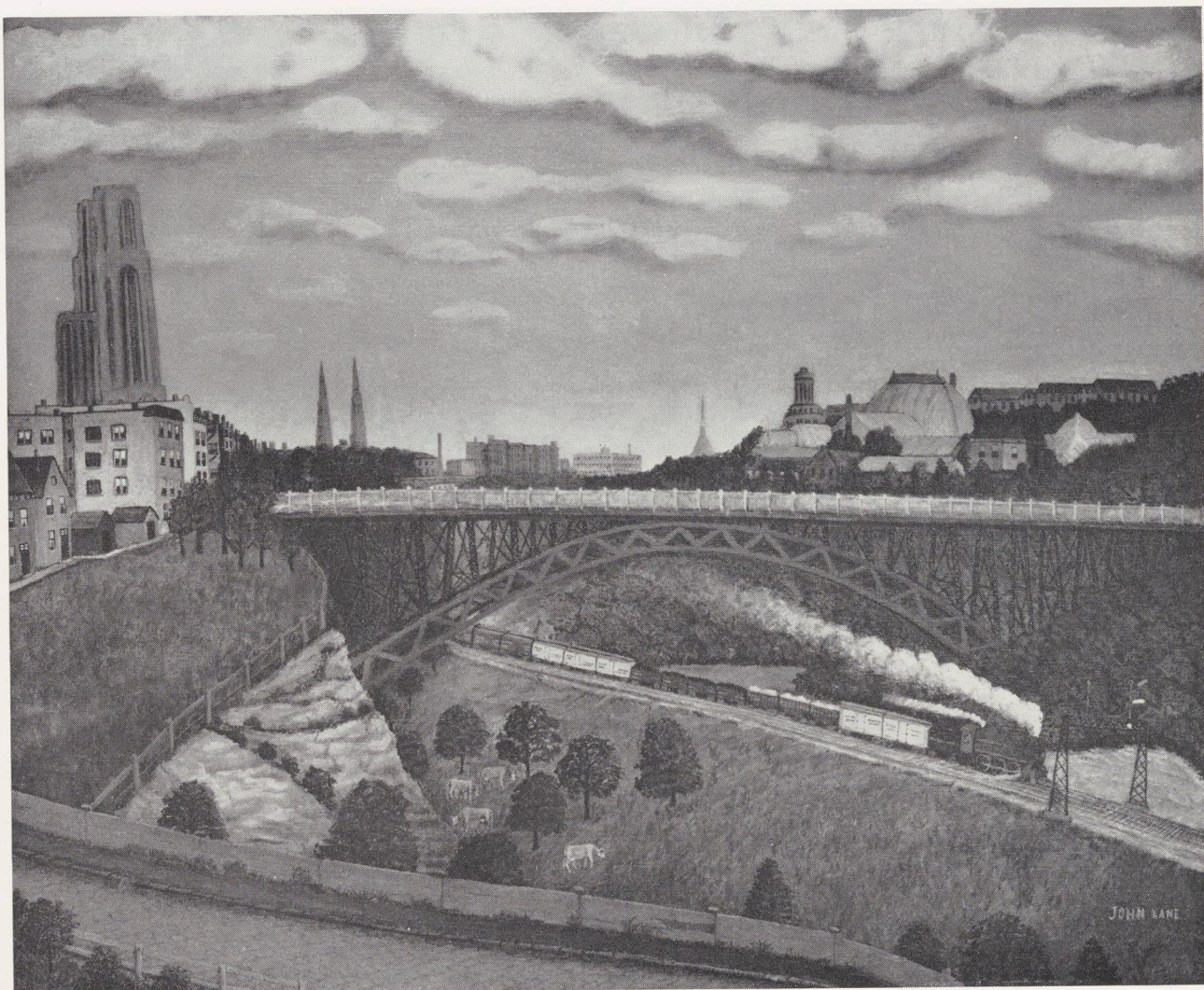




Pietà
1933
oil on canvas
21½ x 24 inches

Lent by
Harold Diamond Inc.





Panther Hollow, Pittsburgh
c. 1933-34
oil on canvas
27 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 34 inches

Lent by
Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute,
Gift of
Mr. and Mrs. James F. Hillman



1888-1946

While the American Negro has excelled in literature, the performing arts, and in his great contributions to music—the spiritual and jazz—he has not until fairly recent times entered into other art forms. The heritage of African carving and decoration virtually disappeared once the Negro slave accepted Christianity. The slave had to recast himself into the Greco-Roman tradition of the West, the antithesis of the exotic cultures of Africa, and, once freed, had little opportunity to paint or sculpt for obvious socio-economic reasons. In 1940, a crippled, self-taught Negro artist named Horace Pippin was given a one-man show at the Carlen Galleries in Philadelphia. Of him, Albert C. Barnes wrote in his introduction to the catalogue of the exhibition, “It is probably not too much to say that he is the first important Negro painter to appear on the American scene and that his work shares with that of John Kane the distinction of being the most individual and unadulterated painting authentically expressive of the American spirit that has been produced during our generation.”

- 82 Horace Pippin was forty-three years old when he completed his first painting, *The End of War: Starting Home*. He had worked on it for three years, painting over and over the surface of the canvas until it was incrustated with impasto. The somber colors reflected the intense psychic as well as physical suffering he experienced in the first World War. In *My Life's Story*, which is appended to this section, Pippin wrote of the years from his birth through 1940 and devoted almost three-quarters of his autobiography to his army service of twenty-two months. His emotional response to the war is conveyed, however, not by his factual account, but rather by his obsession with the theme in his paintings. So vivid and painful were his memories, that he painted four other war scenes in the years immediately following his first work, including *Gas Alarm Outpost: Argonne Sector* and, 83 in 1945, one of his greatest oils, *The Barracks*. 117

When Pippin was discharged from the Army in May of 1919, he had lost the use of his right arm, the result of a German sniper's bullet. He returned to West Chester, Pennsylvania, and, in 1920, married Jennie Ora Featherstone Wade, a widow with a son.

To augment his small disability pension, his wife took in laundry, and Pippin helped to deliver it. He was mindful of the lost sketches he had made in France and, in despair, sought to decorate empty cigar boxes but derived too little creative satisfaction to continue. His paralyzed arm seemed to preclude any further interest in art until about 1925, when he began to experiment with hollow relief, made by scorching a wood panel with a heated iron poker. He was proud of his "invention" and completed seventeen burnt wood panels in all. Eight panels were done as late as 1941, and among these was *Saturday Night Bath*. In some instances they were devoid of color other than the black charred wood and white surface. Some were painted.

To overcome the immobility of his arm, Pippin held his brush with the fingers of his right hand, grasped his right wrist with his left hand, and, by moving his left arm, manipulated his brush on the canvas. He worked at his easel for incredibly long periods, often as much as sixteen hours at a time, and mostly at night. He painted across the canvas with little strokes, using painfully narrow brushes. This probably accounted for the small size of his paintings—few exceed two by three feet. Color was added once the basic pattern was laid down. It is obvious that the third dimensionality of his panel reliefs had bearing on his technical approach to his early oils, where he reversed the procedure, building up his surfaces with layers of heavy pigment.

In 1937 a painting Pippin had placed in the window of a shoe repair shop was noticed by Dr. Christian Brinton, who happened to be passing by with N. C. Wyeth, the noted illustrator. Brinton arranged for Pippin's first one-man show at the West Chester Community Center that summer. Ten oils and seven burnt wood panels were displayed. The artist was suddenly lionized by Main Line society. He was invited to teas. His pictures began to sell, and among the early purchasers was Charles Loughton, who bought *Cabin in the Cotton I*. Holger Cahill selected four of his paintings for The Museum of Modern Art's *Masters of Popular Painting* exhibition of 1938.

At this point in his career, Pippin was most fortu-

nate in securing the ideal dealer. Robert Carlen of the Carlen Galleries in Philadelphia understood the artist's needs and gave him constant encouragement. Pippin visited Carlen regularly and heeded the dealer's suggestions, a demonstration of supreme faith since he had displeased Brinton by his refusal to accept his "discoverer's" directions. Pippin displayed a complete indifference to praise and criticism from all except Carlen, who, in addition to advice, provided him with proper paints and canvas. Color and ease of expression emerged in Pippin's painting as a result of this unique relationship.

Before the opening of Pippin's first one-man show at the Carlen Galleries in January, 1940, Albert C. Barnes bought three of his works and invited him to visit his great collection at the Barnes Foundation in Merion, Pennsylvania. Robert Carlen tells of the incident. Pippin was not impressed by the fabulous assemblage of works by Renoir, Cézanne, Matisse, Soustine, Picasso, Seurat, etc. He thought little of Matisse, with whom he was often compared. It was "Renoyer" (Renoir) who caught his attention, and his amusing, unprintable remark related not to the French master's palette, but to the upper torso of his female subjects. For several weeks, Pippin attended lectures and classes at the Foundation, but he had too little regard for art instruction to remain.

Pippin's works were shown regularly at the Carlen Galleries and eventually at The Downtown Gallery in New York, the two galleries dividing the artist's production. A large exhibition at the Arts Club of Chicago took place in 1941 and included thirty-nine paintings and panels. The San Francisco Museum of Art showed his works in 1942. In 1943, 1944, and 1945 Pippin was invited to Carnegie Institute's *Painting in the United States* exhibitions (replacements for the Pittsburgh Internationals during the war years), receiving Fourth Honorable Mention for his *Cabin in the Cotton III* in 1944. His work sold extremely well, and museums began to acquire his paintings. Hollywood actors, playwrights, and the usual perceptive collectors became interested in him, and some of his pictures found their way into foreign collections.

In his last years, Pippin's painting strengthened

considerably, but the artist's disposition soured. He quarreled with his wife, who had neither comprehended nor trusted his art and continued to take in washing despite the income from sales, a severe rebuff to his pride. As their misunderstandings increased, Pippin took a mistress, on whom he spent all his money. He drank heavily, standing his cronies to rounds at the bar. Ora Pippin broke under the strain. She was committed to a mental institution shortly before her husband's death on July 6, 1946, and died two weeks after he did. Pippin was fifty-eight years old when he succumbed to a stroke.

In the exhibition catalogue for *Masters of Popular Painting*, published by The Museum of Modern Art in 1938, Dorothy C. Miller quotes Pippin's statement, "How I Paint: The colors are very simple such as brown, amber, yellow, black, white and green. The pictures which I have already painted come to me in my mind, and if to me it is a worth while picture, I paint it. I go over that picture in my mind several times and when I am ready to paint it I have all the details that I need. I take my time and examine every coat of paint carefully and to be sure that the exact color I have in mind is satisfactory to me. Then I work my foreground from the background. That throws the background away from the foreground. In other words bringing out my work. The time it takes to make a picture depends on the nature of the picture. For instance the picture called *The Ending of the War, Starting Home* which was my first picture. On that picture I couldn't do what I really wanted to do, but my next picture I am working my thought more perfectly. My opinion of art is that a man should have love for it, because my idea is that he paints from his heart and mind. To me it seems impossible for another to teach one of Art."

As Pippin stated, every action he brought to his canvas was entirely preconceived. He had no alternative, for his useless right arm would not permit him the large gesture, the impromptu sketch. The antithesis of spontaneity in painting is generally a predominance of design, and it is this element that characterized all of Pippin's work. The horizontal lines of

the floor boards, repeated in the partially revealed wall laths in *Domino Players*, are broken by the strong verticals of the table legs and stove pipe, while the staccato dots of the dominoes (white on black) are reiterated in the blouse (black on white) of the central figure, in the cap (black on red) of her opponent, and in the white flames seen against the red of the fire in the stove. In *John Brown Reading His Bible*, tremendous impact is given to the wild-eyed abolitionist who sits erect, in contrast to the horizontal planes of the table surface and cabin wall.

Victorian Interior is a witty study in formal arrangement. Here, the gigantic floral bouquet divides the painting into two completely separated but balanced sections brought together by an astonishing rug and, at a secondary level, by a series of lace antimacassars and doilies. Humor plays an important role in Pippin's work, and probably *Lilies*, with its two semi-nude sculptures—one stepping out of her panties, the other removing her slip—is the most hilarious. The profusion of pattern in the rug, bookshelves, and endless lace doilies is almost smothering, but the painting comes off by virtue of the enormous bowl of chaste flowers centered in the foreground.

The element of design is again dominant in Pippin's portraits. In *A Chester County Art Critic*, Christian Brinton is portrayed in front of a bookshelf in which the volumes provide a patterned background for the pallid head. The rounded forms of the buttons on his jacket, his blue eyes, and the polka-dotted curtain form a contrast to the vertical books, as does the swirling design in his tie and pocket handkerchief. In his brilliant *Self-Portrait*, the structural elements of the easel—the dotted tacks on the side of the canvas, the right leg swung at an obtuse angle—make for an over-all composition reminiscent of Stuart Davis' works. *Crucifixion* portrays Christ against a very heavily-grained wooden cross, and the brilliant red drops of blood are like stars in the greyed sky. For the most part, Pippin preferred to center his subject matter, and this is obvious in his still life paintings as well as in his portraits.

Like other self-taught artists, Pippin painted themes based on childhood memories, and such works

as *Sunday Morning Breakfast*, *Domino Players*, *The Milk Man of Gosben*, and *Saturday Night Bath* provide us with some insight into his background. There was poverty, but also pride and dignity. Pippin was committed to the Negro's struggle for tolerance and social equality. In *After Supper, West Chester*, he sought harmony. *Mr. Prejudice* spoke out against those who would insinuate racial strife into war effort (symbolized by the V for Victory sign). This is one of his few works reminiscent of the social realism that dominated much of the art in America during the 1930's. Pippin's mother was present when John Brown was hanged at Charles Town, West Virginia. *John Brown Reading His Bible* and *John Brown Going to His Hanging* are two of his most powerful paintings. Pippin considered John Brown, like Lincoln, a martyr in the struggle to free the slaves.

Had Horace Pippin lived long enough to finish the painting he was working on at the time of his death, this exhibition would have begun and closed on the identical theme, the prophecy from Isaiah, "... They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." More than one hundred and twenty-five years separated Edward Hicks's first version of *The Peaceable Kingdom* and Pippin's incompleted *Holy Mountain IV*; and yet the same plea for peace and understanding among men pervaded the thinking of both artists. Hicks, at the age of eighteen, had joined the local militia, and the only action he saw was on the drill field; whereas Pippin had not only experienced at first hand the horrors of trench warfare in the first World War, but felt the terrible impact of World War II. It was during the second conflict that he painted his *Holy Mountain* series. The first *Holy Mountain* is dated June 6, 1944, the second was completed on December 7 of the same year, and the third followed in the early part of 1945.

The act of painting for Pippin began as a catharsis, a means of ridding himself of the nightmarish encounters of war. When he depicted American troops, they were Negro soldiers, members of his own

division—himself. From 1936 until 1942, war as a subject disappeared from his canvases, only to return with the outbreak of World War II. However, there was a significant change in the later subjects. Mrs. 103 Walter Townsend, in describing *Victory Vase*, 1942, which is in her collection, notes: "The servicemen to the left and right of the vase are in World War I gear and the planes flying over the Alps are of that period, but there is expressed none of the terror that one sees in the paintings of his memories of the war—only the intense burst of life in the flowers against the luminous background . . . the triumphant expression of the beauty in the survival of the spirit over pain and fear." Pippin had resolved many of his early fears and, more important, had turned hatred of war into a strong personal creed of peace and justice.

Robert Carlen owned several versions of Hicks's *The Peaceable Kingdom* and displayed them at different times in his gallery where Pippin could readily have seen them. There can be little question of Pippin's having taken the theme for his own in creating his *Holy Mountain* series. It was Carlen who suggested that Pippin write an "explanation" of *Holy Mountain I*, and we are indebted to him for the following statement of the artist:

"To my dear friends:

"To tell you why I painted the picture. It is the holy mountain my Holy mountain.

"Now my dear friends.

"The world is in a bad way at this time. I mean war. And men have never loved one another. There is trouble every place you Go today. Then one thinks of peace, yes there will be—peace, so I look at Isaiah xi-6-1— there I found that there will be peace. I went over it 4- or 5- times in my mind. Every time I read it I got a new thought on it. So I went to work. Isaiah xi the 6v to the 10v gave me the picture, and to think that all the animals that kill the weak ones will Dwell together like the wolf will Dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together.

"And a little child, shall lead them then to think also That the cow and the Bear shall feed. Their young ones shall lie down together and the lion shall eat

straw like the ox. Then I had something else to think about also, and that is the asp, and the Cockatrice's Den, which is the most deadly thing of them all, I think, for it can kill by looking at you and to think that a suckling child shall play on the hole of the asp. And the weaned child shall put his hand on the Cockatrice's Den, and this is why it is done, for the earth shall be full of the *knowledge* of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. So I painted it so that men may think of it. I can't say—any more of this painting, from Horace Pippin to his friends.

"Now my picture would not be complete of today if the little ghostlike memory did not appear in the left of the picture. As the men are dying, today the little crosses tell us of them in the first world war and what is doing in the south today—all of that we are going through now. But there will be peace."

My Life's Story

by Horace Pippin

I was born in West Chester, Pennsylvania on February 22nd, 1888. My mother left West Chester when I was very young. And my first knowledge of anything was in Goshen, New York. I went to school on Merry Green Hill in Goshen. It was a one room school house, which went as high as the eighth grade.

When I was seven I began to get into trouble. It happened this way. In spelling, if the word was dog, stove, dishpan or something like that, I had a sketch of the article at the end of the word. And the results were, I would have to stay in after school and finish my lesson the right way. This happened frequently and I just couldn't help it. The worse part of it was, I would get a beating when I got home, for coming home late, regardless what I were kept in for.

One day I got a magazine with a lot of advertisements in it of dry goods. In this magazine there were a sketch of a very funny face. Under this face printed in large letters it said make me and win a prize. And I did and sent it to Chicago, to the address that was given. The following week the prize came. It was a box of crayon pencils of six different colors. Also a

box of cold water paint and two brushes. These I were delighted in and used them often. Whenever our Sunday school gave a festival, they asked each scholar to donate some thing for it. I got a yard of muslin, and cut it into six pieces, then fringed the edge of each making a doily out of them. On each I drew a biblical picture such as Jesus Ascending, Elijah Ascending in the Chariot of Fire, Daniel in the Lion's Den, The Three Hebrew Children in the Firy Furnace, Moses in the Firy Bush and the Beggar at the Gate. These I worked faithfully over, using my color crayon pencils and taking them to the festival. They hung them on a wire along the wall to be sold. I liked them very much. During the festival we children played in the church yard, until we were called to get our refreshments. When I came in I looked along the wall where the doilies had been hung and they were missing. I asked my teacher what had happened to them. She told me they had been sold to an old lady. I was so excited upon finding out that they had been sold, I didn't even ask the lady's name. I took the good news to my mother, who was delighted to hear the good news.

One day about a month after the festival a lady standing in her door stopped me, as I was going by on my way to school, and asked me if I wasn't Horace Pippin. I answered yes mam. She asked me if I made the doilies. I told her yes. She said you certainly make some bum things. And drew her hand from under her apron. And in her hand was a clean piece of fringed muslin. And said look at this, I bought it at the festival with a picture on it. I washed it and this is all I have. I explained to her that the picture was only made of crayon and could not be washed.

When I were ten my mother went to the country to work at a hotel and taken me with her. And there I went to a country school. The following year she went to Middletown, New York to work in a private family.

At the age of fourteen I went to work for Mr. James Gavin on his farm which was on the order of a summer resort. The work was light and we were done early in the evenings. After supper one night Mr. Gavin set down to read his paper and fell asleep. While

he were asleep I sketched him. And left the paper on the table in the kitchen. He woke up and saw the drawing and asked me who did it. I said I did. He wanted to send me to school where I could take up drawing, but I left his farm before he had a chance to, because my mother was sick and I had to go to Goshen to her. And this was the ending of my school days. Because I had to hunt work to take care of my mother. She was living in the old Mill House.

I am now fifteen years old, and my first job was unloading coal at the coal yard. I went from the coal yard to a feed store. And from job to job. Until I heard that they wanted a porter at the St. Elmo Hotel. I got the job as porter and I am now eighteen. Some of my friends told me, after hearing where I was going to work, that I wouldn't stay there three weeks. But I was there for seven years. During this time my mother died. The year that she died was 1911.

The following year I went to Paterson, New Jersey and worked for the Fidelity Storage House, on their moving vans, and packed furniture for shipping all over the United States. In 1916 I went to Wawa, New Jersey and worked for the American Brakeshoe Company. There is where I had the opportunity to learn to be a moulder. But in March 1917 I gave two weeks notice to quit. On my last day I was called to the head office and the superintendent said to me, you have your applications in for winding up today, haven't you. I said yes Sir! And you are going into the Army aren't you? I said yes, I am going with the fifteenth New York regiment. He said if you come back your job will be waiting for you and I wish you good luck and God's speed. On the fifteenth day of July 1917 we went to Camp Whitman then to Camp Dix and then to Camp Wadsworth in South Carolina. Then back to New York to sail. We went aboard the ship Pocohantas at Hoboken. We were a day at sea when something happened to the driving bar, and we had to turn around and come back. It took a month for the repairs and while they were making the repairs we stayed at the armory in New York City located on 133rd Street. After a month we again boarded the ship and this time we were headed for France. They discovered fire in the coal bin and we had to return to

Hoboken. Finally on December 3rd we went aboard again. Layed in the harbor all night but during the night a blizzard came up and the wind was fierce. At twelve o'clock I had my guards posted. And went in to roll a cigarette. During the time I was rolling the cigarette, the Hawk hit us, throwing me against the side of the cabin with such a shock, I didn't know what had happened. In a few seconds sailors was running to and fro. I asked one what was the matter and he told me that the coal hawk had struck us on the port side above water line. They worked all night cementing and boarding the hole up. This was Dec. 4th and Dec. 5th the ship was repaired and we got under way. We were fourteen days at sea. Dec. 27th we landed at Brest. We took a train from Brest to St. Nazaire. Here we were put to work constructing a huge rail road yard, and building roads and unloading ships. In January our third battalion was ordered to Colquidan. At this place there is a big American artillery camp. Also there was a large German prison camp and it was for this purpose we were there, to guard the prison camp. We were there three weeks. And we got orders to join the rest of our regiment at Givry-en-Argonne. There to be formerly transferred to the French high command and to be known as the 369th Regiment. After a month's training learning the French rifle, the 369th was sent into action in Bois-d'Hauze, Champagne. We stayed there until July 4th 1918. Our ranks were thinned by the deadly German fire. We were completely worn out. We were relieved by the fourth French Chasseurs-a-pied. After resting behind the lines for a few weeks we went to Minancourt near Butte-de Mesnil. Here's where we bore the brunt of the German attack of July 15th. This section was very pretty, rolling hills and peaked mountains and I made several sketches of them but had to destroy them. I did this all through the war.

Early in September the 369th was transferred from the 16th French division in which we had been serving and made an integral part of the 161st French division. On the morning of September 26th we joined with the Moroccans on our left and the native French on our right. Here we had it hard. I was made corporal in Camp Dix and it was my duty to be at a listening

post every night until relieved. The listening post is a sacrifice concern. They only send three men and a corporal. There is no correspondence at the listening post after midnight. The runner comes and gets your report at midnight and returns to the main trench. After that there is no more correspondence regardless.

Some time in July one of the strangest things happened. We were planning to go on a raid. They didn't force any one to go, it was all voluntary. The zero hour had been posted at 12 o'clock. At 11:30 we were at the P.C. getting our final instructions. While we were there a boy in the outfit looked weary and funny, some time he looked like he was scared through, then again he looked like every nerve was shaking. I never saw a man like this before. I asked him what was wrong. His eyes all but bulged out of his head, he said I am not coming back. I told him that he didn't have to go into this raid. He volunteered himself. And if you are sick you can be exempted, but he said no I am going through with it but I am not coming back. We left the P.C. quarter to twelve. It was the worse fifteen minutes I ever put in, watching this boy. We were on our way to our starting point. We arrived in our places about one minute before the artillery began to fire. As soon as they did we jumped over the top for the enemy trenches. Five minutes after we were back in our trenches again with two German prisoners. And the boy didn't come back as he said. A German had run him through. He foretold his end. I often think of him in this respect. I have seen men die in all forms and shapes, but never one who knew like he did.

They kept moving us from place to place. Rumors were going around that we were going to have a big drive. They would wake you up at midnight and put you on the road and God would know where we were going because we didn't. Finally we landed in a large field. The first thing we did was to put up our pup tents. We just got them up when it started to rain. All barns, houses and everything was taken up, there wasn't any place for us to camp but in the field. We were there for a week and it rained every day. For months I didn't know what day it was or what month it was and at this present time I couldn't tell, but the

weather acted like October. The time came when we were to give up everything that we had, extra shirts, pants and shoes. We only had two blankets, tooth brush and tooth paste and we started off for the Champagne sector that morning. At noon we reached an old abandoned coal mine and we stayed in there until night when we came out the stars were shining pretty, stopping only to get ammunition. We go into the front line trenches, spread out men shoulder to shoulder as far as you could see. The artillery was lined along the road as far as you could see, hub to hub, all kinds and makes. Then word got out that we were going over the top at daybreak, that was confirmed by our Lieutenant. We got as much sleep as we could until the zero hour. Then the artillery opened up and you would have thought the world was coming to an end. The zero hour for the artillery had come. To see those shells bursting in the night was a pretty sight. But the gas, dust and smoke was terrible. At daybreak we went over the top. We advanced until around noon, and the artillery moved up and began firing again. Then we started another advancement and by night we laid along the crest of a hill where the enemy had plenty of machine guns and they swept that hill all night long. At daybreak we were to start our advancement again, but the machine gun fire was so great we had to change our position and get to a flank to get over the hill. Men laying all over wounded and dead, some was being carried. We wished we could help the wounded but we couldn't. We had to leave them there and keep advancing, ducking from shell hole to shell hole all day. That night I counted fourteen machine gun nests out of order in our path. The next morning came like the rest, but the machine gun fire wasn't as heavy as it was the morning before. But the snipers were plentiful. I remember spotting a shell hole and made a run for it. Just as I was within three feet and getting ready to dive in I were hit in the shoulder. There was four in the shell hole. One bound my wound the best he could and they all left me alone. I thought I could crawl out and get to a first aid station but a sniper kept me in the hole so long that I lost too much blood to get out on my own power. It was late in the afternoon when the French

snipers came by. One stopped at the shell hole where I was shot and I beckoned to him to get down and tried to explain that the sniper was there and would get him. While I was trying to explain to him, a bullet passed through his head and it didn't even knock his helmet off. And he stood there for at least ten seconds before he slipped down and when he did slid down on top of me I had lost so much blood by this time I couldn't even move him. After a while a French sergeant came by and was surprised to see his buddy dead. I motioned to him to get down and he did. He sat in the shell hole with me and he told another man to get the sniper. A minute after that I heard the French rifle and knew the sniper wasn't there any more. He came back, said that he got him. Two stretcher bearer came by and got me out of the hole and laid me along a path. It started to rain that morning about nine and it rained all day and at night it increased. My stretcher was full of water. About ten o'clock that night reinforcements were coming up. I could hear them splashing in the mud some nearly stepped upon me. Finally the reinforcement had taken over this sector and sent their stretcher bearers after me. I was taken to a dugout. The doctor looked my wound over and I went to sleep. The next morning I woke up and dead men were on both sides of me. They were carrying the wounded out and leaving the dead in the dugout. It was still raining. It wasn't long before a French officer came along with German prisoners and they carried me down to the road where the ambulance could pick us up. Arriving at the field hospital I was operated upon. A couple of days after, I went to Leon hospital to Vichy to the Hotel St.-de-Baine which was used as a hospital at that time. Christmas found me in Brest. The day after Christmas we were getting on a transport to come home. This ship was named Northern Pacific which was grounded on a sand bar at Far Island, New Jersey. It were a hospital ship. We were supposed to be in New York on New Year's Day 1919. But we got there January 5th 1919. We went to Far Hill Hospital and from there to Long Beach, Long Island and from there to Fort Ontario, Lake Ontario where I was discharged May 22nd 1919. My right arm was bound to me. I could not use it for anything.

But my mind runs back to the sketches I had made in France which I had to destroy. I married in 1920, November 21st.

One winter, I tried to write my story of some of my experiences but did such an unsuccessful job I gave it up. Then I started to make drawings on wood panels ten years after my discharge. Still my arm and shoulder were so weak I could not work long at a time, but I kept trying. One day I decided to get some oil paint and I started the picture that was in my mind, "The Ending of the War Starting Home," and made others until my work was discovered by Dr. Christian Brinton. This is my life's story from 1888-1940.

Mr. Selden Rodman has graciously consented to the reprinting here of *My Life's Story*. It was published in his volume, *Horace Pippin, A Negro Painter in America*, 1947, The Quadrangle Press, Inc., New York. Horace Pippin's "explanation" of his *Holy Mountain I* painting, which is included in the text, also appeared in Mr. Rodman's book.





Gas Alarm Outpost:

Argonne Sector

1931

oil on canvas

22 x 30 inches

Lent by

Fred R. Sherry





The Blue Tiger
1933
oil on canvas
16 x 28 inches

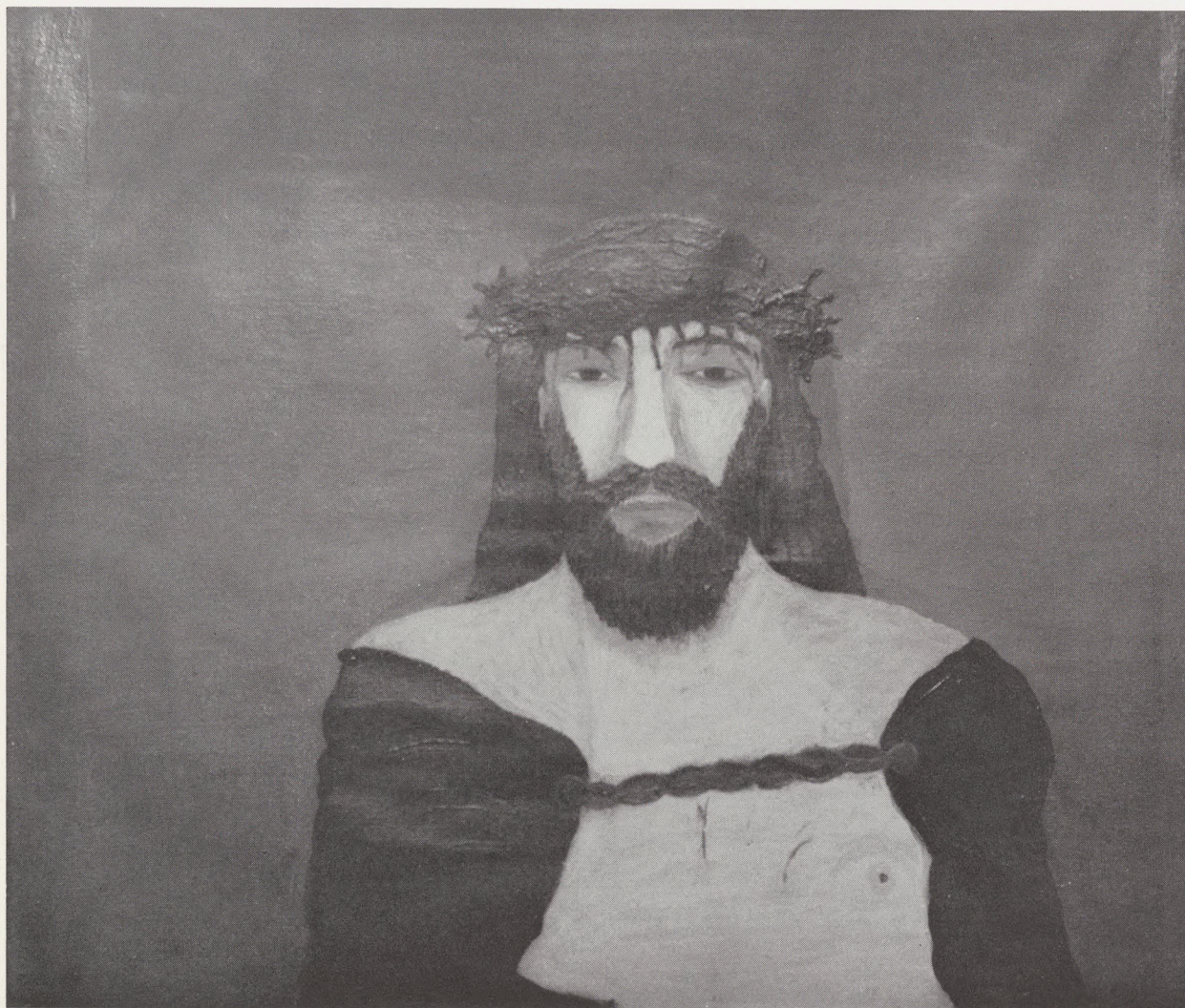
Lent by
Carl Preston Green





Landscape
c. 1936
oil on canvas
24 x 30 inches

Lent by
Bryn Mawr College





A Chester County Art Critic
(Portrait of Christian Brinton)
1940
oil on canvas
21½ x 16 inches

Lent by
Philadelphia Museum of Art





Amish Letter Writer
1940
oil on canvas
11 x 19 inches

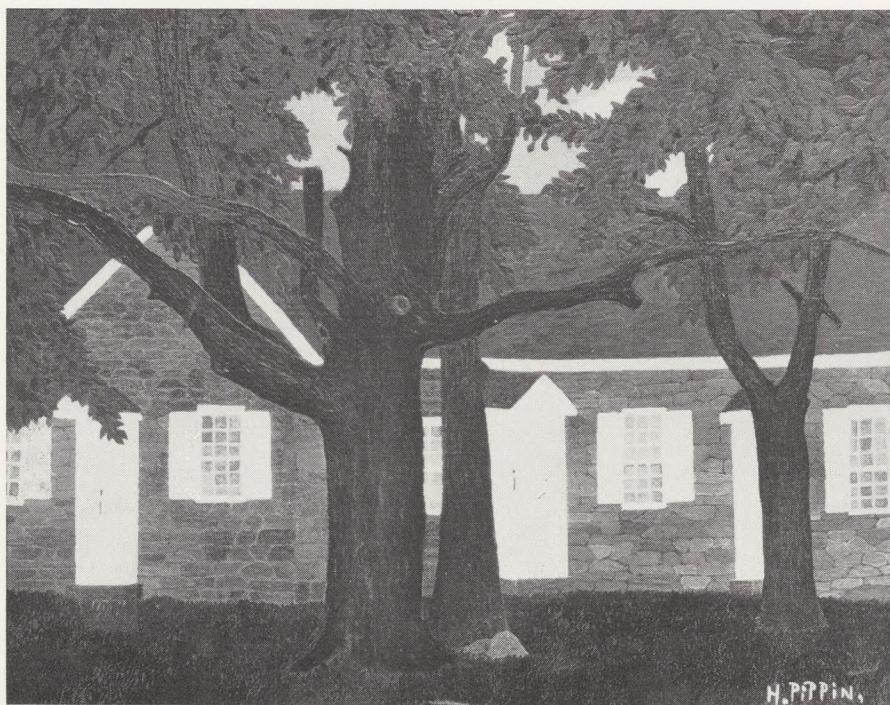
Lent by
Mr. and Mrs. Samuel L. Feldman





West Chester Courthouse
1940
oil on canvas board
22 x 28 inches

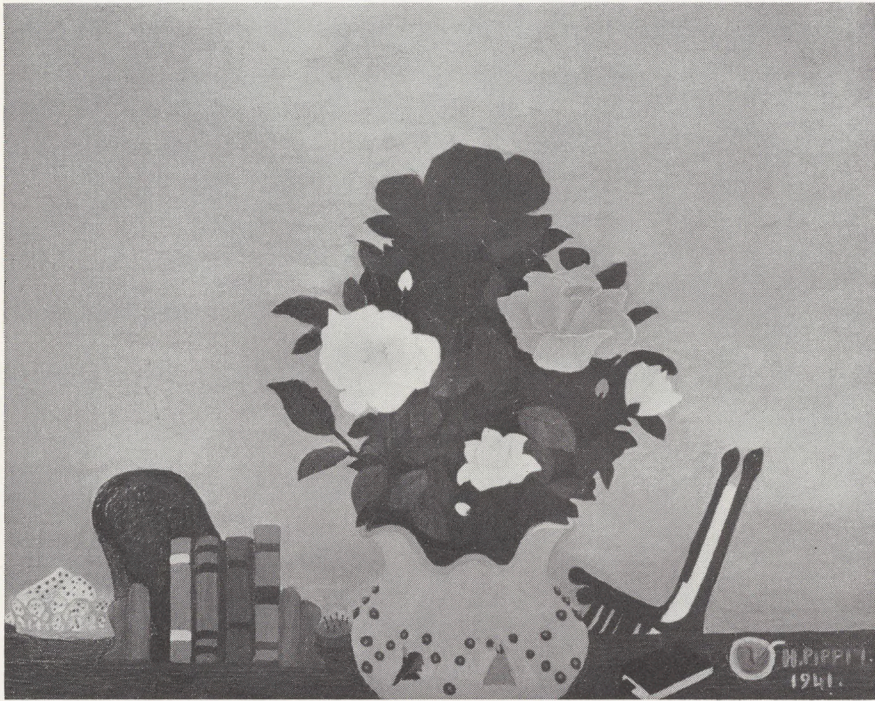
Lent by
Mr. and Mrs. David J. Grossman





Self-Portrait
1941
oil on canvas
14 x 11 inches

Lent by
Albright-Knox Art Gallery,
Room of Contemporary Art Fund





Lilies
1941
oil on canvas
19½ x 27½ inches

Lent by
Dr. and Mrs. Michael Watter





John Brown Reading His Bible
1942
oil on canvas
16 x 20 inches

Lent by
Dr. and Mrs. Paul Todd Makler





The Wash
c. 1942
oil on canvas
14 x 18 inches

Lent by
Mrs. B. Franklin Mechling





Victory Vase
1942
oil on canvas
20 x 19 inches

Lent by
Mrs. Walter Powell Townsend





Crucifixion
1943
oil on canvas
16 x 20 inches

Lent by
Lee A. Ault





Domino Players
1943
oil on composition panel
12 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 22 inches

Lent by
The Phillips Collection





Sunday Morning Breakfast
c. 1943
oil on canvas
15½ x 19½ inches

Lent by
Mr. and Mrs. Albert Lewin





Abe Lincoln's First Book
c. 1944
oil on canvas
24 x 30 inches

Lent by
Mr. and Mrs. James L. Winokur



Quaker Mother and Child
c. 1944
oil on canvas
16 x 20 inches

Lent by Museum of Art,
Rhode Island School of Design



Interior
c. 1944
oil on canvas
23½ x 29½ inches

Lent by
Mrs. A. L. Spitzer





Love Letter (Summer Flowers)

1944

oil on canvas

9 x 12 inches

Lent by

Mrs. Edith Gregor Halpert

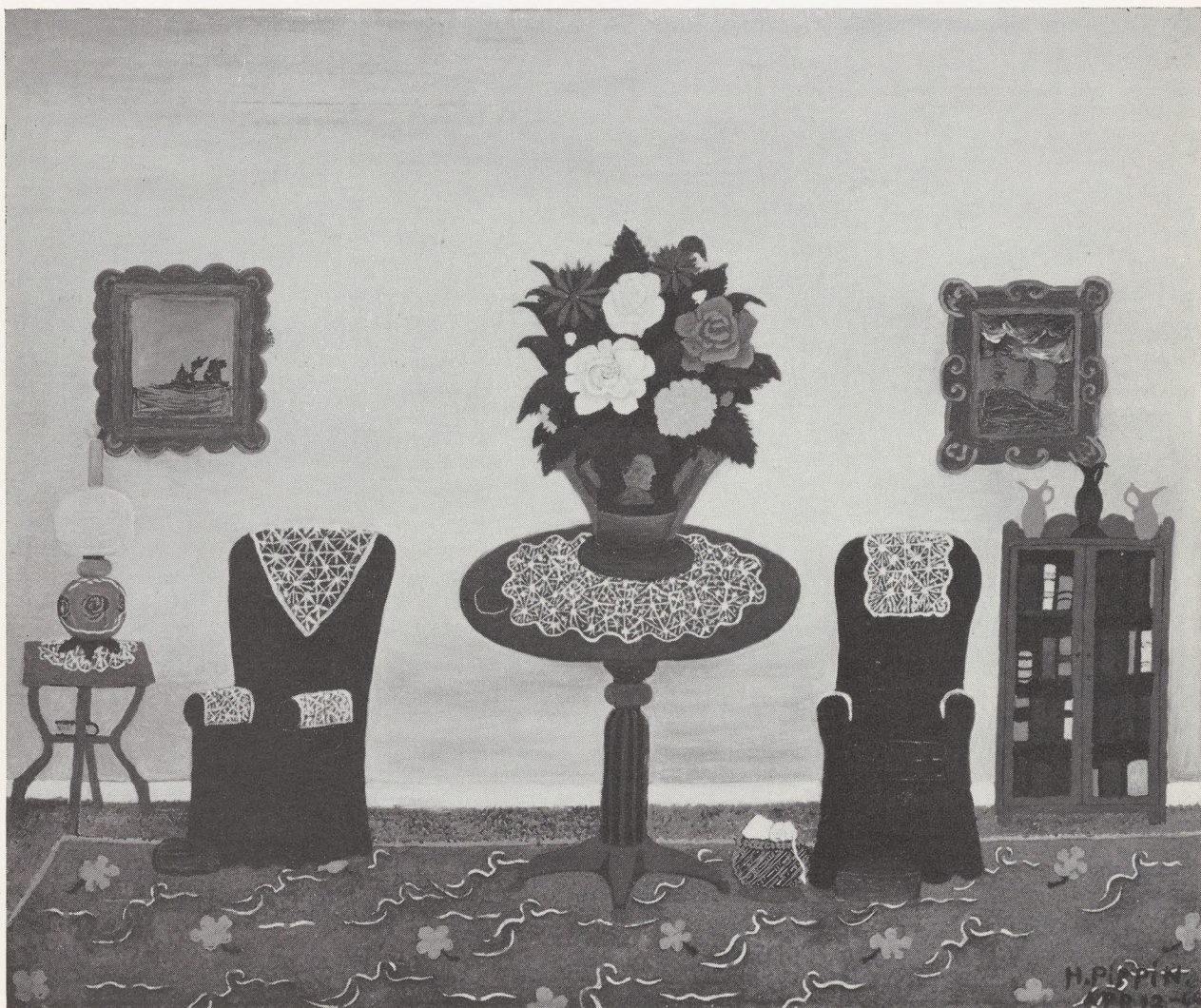




The Barracks
1945
oil on canvas
25 x 30 inches

Lent by
The Phillips Collection





Victorian Interior
1946
oil on canvas
25¼ x 30 inches

Lent by
The Metropolitan Museum of Art,
Arthur H. Hearn Fund, 1958





Man on a Bench
c. 1946
oil on canvas
13 x 18 inches

Lent by
Mrs. Sidney E. Cohn

Printed by
Carnegie Institute Press,
Elmer Eversmann,
Director.
Color Printing
Davis and Warde.
Design by
Kenneth Hiebert



